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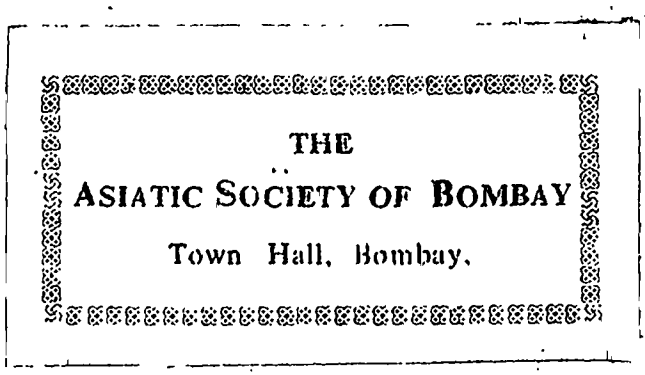

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THE ESSAYS OF MICHEL DE MONTAIGNE

TRANSLATED BY
CHARLES COTTON

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CONTENTS.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Of the inconstancy of our actions	1
II.	Of drunkenness	9
III.	A custom of the Isle of Cea	19
IV.	To-morrow's a new day	36
V.	Of conscience	39
VI.	Use makes perfect	43
VII.	Of recompenses of honour	55
VIII.	Of the affection of fathers to their children	59
IX.	Of the arms of the Parthians	82
X.	Of books	85
XI.	Of cruelty	100
XII.	Apology for Raimond de Sebonde	117
XIII.	Of judging of the death of another	320
XIV.	That the mind hinders itself	328
XV.	That our desires are augmented by difficulty	329
XVI.	Of glory	335
XVII.	Of presumption	351
XVIII.	Of giving the lie	386
XIX.	Of liberty of conscience	391
XX.	That we taste nothing pure	396
XXI.	Against idleness	399
XXII.	Of posting	404
XXIII.	Of ill means employed to a good end	406
XXIV.	Of the Roman grandeur	410
XXV.	Not to counterfeit being sick	412
XXVI.	Of thumbs	414
XXVII.	Cowardice the mother of cruelty	416
XXVIII.	All things have their season	427
XXIX.	Of virtue	429
XXX.	Of a monstrous child	438
XXXI.	Of anger	439
XXXII.	Defence of Seneca and Plutarch	448
XXXIII.	The story of Spurina	455
XXXIV.	Observation on the means to carry on a war according to Julius Cæsar	464
XXXV.	Of three good women	474
XXXVI.	Of the most excellent men	482
XXXVII.	Of the resemblance of children to their fathers	490

ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE.

BOOK THE SECOND.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE INCONSTANCY OF OUR ACTIONS.

SUCH as make it their business to oversee human actions, do not find themselves in anything so much perplexed as to reconcile them and bring them into the world's eye with the same lustre and reputation; for they commonly so strangely contradict one another that it seems impossible they should proceed from one and the same person. We find the younger Marius one while a son of Mars, and another a son of Venus. Pope Boniface VIII. entered, it is said, into his Papacy like a fox, behaved himself in it like a lion, and died like a dog; and who could believe it to be the same Nero, the perfect image of all cruelty, who, having the sentence of a condemned man brought to him to sign, as was the custom, cried out, "O, that I had never been taught to write!" [1] so much it went to his heart to condemn a man to death. All story is full of such examples, and every man is able to produce so many to himself, or out of his own practice or observation, that I sometimes wonder to see men of understanding give themselves the trouble of sorting these pieces, considering that irresolution appears to me to be the most common and manifest vice of our nature: witness the famous verse of the player Publius,

[1] Seneca, De Clementia, ii. 1.

"Malum consilium est, quod mutari non potest."[1]

There seems some reason in forming a judgment of a man from the most usual methods of his life; but, considering the natural instability of our manners and opinions, I have often thought even the best authors a little out in so obstinately endeavouring to make of us any constant and solid contexture; they choose a general air of a man, and according to that interpret all his actions, of which, if they cannot bend some to a uniformity with the rest, they are presently imputed to dissimulation. Augustus has escaped them, for there was in him so apparent, sudden, and continual variety of actions all the whole course of his life, that he has slipped away clear and undecided from the most daring critics. I can more hardly believe a man's constancy than any other virtue, and believe nothing sooner than the contrary. He that would judge of a man in detail and distinctly, bit by bit, would oftener be able to speak the truth. It is a hard matter, from all antiquity, to pick out a dozen men who have formed their lives to one certain and constant course, which is the principal design of wisdom; for to comprise it all in one word, says one of the ancients,[2] and to contract all the rules of human life into one, "it is to will, and not to will, always one and the same thing: I will not vouchsafe," says he, "to add, provided the will be just, for if it be not just, it is impossible it should be always one." I have indeed formerly learned that vice is nothing but irregularity and want of measure, and therefore 'tis impossible to fix constancy to it. 'Tis a saying of Demosthenes, "that the beginning of all virtue is consultation and deliberation; the end and perfection, constancy." If we would resolve on any certain course by reason, we should pitch upon the best, but nobody has thought on't.

"Quod petiit, spernit; repetit, quod nuper omisit;
Æstuat, et vitæ disconvenit ordine toto."[3]

[1] "'Tis evil counsel that will admit no change."—PUB. MIM. ex Aul. Gell., xvii. 14.

[2] Seneca, Ep., 20.

[3] "That which he sought he despises; what he has lost, he seeks. He fluctuates, and flies from that to this: his whole life a contradiction."—HORACE, *Ep.*, 1, i. 98.

Our ordinary practice is to follow the inclinations of our appetite, be it to the left or right, upwards or downwards, according as we are wafted by the breath of occasion. We never meditate what we would have till the instant we have a mind to have it; and change like that little creature which receives its colour from what it is laid upon. What we but just now proposed to ourselves we immediately alter, and presently return again to it; 'tis nothing but shifting and inconstancy:

"Ducimur, ut nervis alienis mobile lignum."[1]

We do not go, we are driven; like things that float, now leisurely then with violence, according to the gentleness or rapidity of the current:

"Nonne videmus,
Quid sibi quisque velit, nescire, et quærere semper;
Commutare locum, quasi onus deponere possit?"[2]

Every day a new whimsy, and our humours keep motion with the time.

"Tales sunt hominum mentes, quali pater ipse
Juppiter auctiferas lustravit lumine terras."[3]

We fluctuate betwixt various inclinations; we will nothing freely, nothing absolutely, nothing constantly.[4] In any one who had prescribed and established determinate laws and rules in his head for his own conduct, we should perceive an equality of manners, an order and an infallible relation of one thing or action to another, shine through his whole life; Empedocles observed this discrepancy in the Agrigentines, that they gave themselves up to delights, as if every day was their last, and built as if they had been to live for ever.[5] The judgment would not be hard to make, as is

[1] "We are turned about as tops turn with the thong."—HORACE, *Sat.* ii. 7, 82.

[2] "Do we not see them, uncertain what they would have, and always asking for something new, and to get rid of a burthen."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 1070.

[3] "Such are the minds of men, that they change as the days that father Jupiter sends on the earth."—CICERO, *Frag. Poet.*, lib. x.

[4] Seneca, Ep., 52.

[5] Diogenes Laertius, Life of Empedocles, i. 8.

very evident in the younger Cato; he who therein has found one step, it will lead him to all the rest; 'tis a harmony of very according sounds, that cannot jar. But with us 'tis quite contrary; every particular action requires a particular judgment. The surest way to steer, in my opinion, would be to take our measures from the nearest allied circumstances, without engaging in a longer inquisition, or without concluding any other consequence. I was told, during the civil disorders of our poor kingdom, that a maid, hard by the place where I then was, had thrown herself out of a window to avoid being forced by a common soldier who was quartered in the house; she was not killed by the fall, and therefore, repeating her attempt would have cut her own throat, had she not been prevented; but having, nevertheless, wounded herself to some show of danger, she voluntarily confessed that the soldier had not as yet importuned her otherwise than by courtship, earnest solicitation, and presents; but that she was afraid that in the end he would have proceeded to violence, all which she delivered with such a countenance and accent, and withal embrued in her own blood, the highest testimony of her virtue, that she appeared another Lucretia; and yet I have since been very well assured that both before and after she was not so difficult a piece. And, according to my host's tale in Ariosto, be as handsome a man and as worthy a gentleman as you will, do not conclude too much upon your mistress' inviolable chastity for having been repulsed; you do not know but she may have a better stomach to your muleteer.

Antigonus, having taken one of his soldiers into a great degree of favour and esteem for his virtue and valour, gave his physicians strict charge to cure him of a long and inward disease under which he had a great while languished, and observing that, after his cure, he went much more coldly to work than before, he asked him what had so altered and cowed him: "Yourself, sir," replied the other, "by having eased me of the pains that made me weary of my life."[1] Lucullus' soldier having been rifled by the enemy, performed upon them in revenge a brave exploit, by

[1] Plutarch, Life of Pelopidas, c. 1.

which having made himself a gainer, Lucullus, who had conceived a good opinion of him from that action, went about to engage him in some enterprise of very great danger, with all the plausible persuasions and promises he could think of;

"Verbis, quæ timido quoque possent addere mentem:"[1]

"Pray employ," answered he, "some miserable plundered soldier in that affair;"

"Quantumvis rusticus, ibit,
Ibit eo, quo vis, qui zonam perdidit, inquit;"[2]

and flatly refused to go. When we read that Mahomet having furiously rated Chasan, Bassa of the Janizaries, because he had seen the Hungarians break into his squadrons, and himself behave very ill in the business, and that Chasan, instead of any other answer, rushed furiously alone, scimitar in hand, into the first body of the enemy where he was presently cut to pieces, we are not to look upon that action, peradventure, so much as vindication as a turn of mind, not so much proceeding from natural valour as from a sudden despite. The man you saw yesterday so adventurous and brave, you must not think it strange to see him as great a poltroon the next: anger, necessity, company, wine, or the sound of the trumpet had roused his spirits; this is no valour formed and established by reason, but accidentally created by such circumstances, and therefore it is no wonder, if by contrary circumstances it appear quite another thing.

These supple variations and contradictions so manifest in us, have given occasion to some to believe that man has two souls; other two distinct powers that always accompany and incline us, the one towards good and the other towards ill, according to their own nature and propension; so abrupt a variety not being imaginable to flow from one and the same source.

For my part, the puff of every accident not only carries

[1] "Words which would have inspired the greatest coward."—HORACE, *Ep.*, ii. 2, 1, 2.

[2] "Let some poor fellow, who has lost his purse, go on your errand, said he."—Idem, ibid., ii. 2, 39.

me along with it according to its own proclivity, but moreover I discompose and trouble myself by the instability of my own posture; and whoever will look narrowly into his own bosom, will hardly find himself twice in the same condition. I give to my soul sometimes one face and sometimes another, according to the side I turn her to. If I speak variously of myself, it is because I consider myself variously; all the contrarieties are there to be found in one corner or another; after one fashion or another: bashful, insolent; chaste, lustful; prating, silent; laborious, delicate; ingenious, heavy; melancholic, pleasant; lying, true; knowing, ignorant; liberal, covetous, and prodigal: I find all this in myself, more or less, according as I turn myself about; and whoever will sift himself to the bottom, will find in himself and even in his own judgment, this volubility and discordance. I have nothing to say of myself entirely, simply, and solidly without mixture and confusion. *Distinguo* is the most universal member of my logic. Though I always intend to speak well of good things, and rather to interpret such things as fall out in the best sense than otherwise, yet such is the strangeness of our condition, that we are often pushed on to do well even by vice itself, if well-doing were not judged by the intention only. One gallant action, therefore, ought not to conclude a man valiant; if a man were brave indeed, he would be always so, and upon all occasions. If it were a habit of valour and not a sally, it would render a man equally resolute in all accidents; the same alone as in company; the same in lists as in a battle: for, let them say what they will, there is not one valour for the pavement and another for the field; he would bear a sickness in his bed as bravely as a wound in the field; and no more fear death in his own house than at an assault. We should not then see the same man charge into a breach with a brave assurance, and afterwards torment himself like a woman for the loss of a trial at law or the death of a child; when, being an infamous coward, he is firm in the necessities of poverty; when he shrinks at the sight of a barber's razor, and rushes fearless upon the swords of the enemy, the action is commendable, not the man.

Many of the Greeks, says Cicero,[1] cannot endure the sight

[1] Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., ii. 27.

of an enemy, and yet are courageous in sickness; the Cimbrians and Celtiberians quite contrary; "nihil enim potest esse æquabile, quod non a certâ ratione proficiscatur."[1] No valour can be more extreme in its kind than that of Alexander: but it is of but one kind nor full enough throughout, nor universal. Incomparable as it is, it has yet some blemishes; of which his being so often at his wits' end upon every light suspicion of his captains, conspiring against his life, and the carrying himself in that inquisition with so much vehemence and indiscreet injustice, and with a fear that subverted his natural reason, is one pregnant instance. The superstition also, with which he was so much tainted, carries along with it some image of pusillanimity; and the excess of his penitence for the murder of Clytus is also a testimony of the unevenness of his courage. All we perform is no other than a cento, as a man may say, of several pieces, and we would acquire honour by a false title. Virtue cannot be followed but for herself, and if one sometimes borrows her mask to some other purpose, she presently pulls it away again. 'Tis a vivid and strong tincture which, when the soul has once thoroughly imbibed it, will not out but with the piece. And, therefore, to make a right judgment of a man, we are long and very observingly to follow his trace: if constancy does not there stand firm upon her own proper base, "cui vivendi via considerata atque provisa est,"[2] if the variety of occurrences makes him alter his pace (his path, I mean, for the pace may be faster or slower) let him go; such a one runs before the wind, "Avau le vent," as the motto of our Talebot has it.

'Tis no wonder, says one of the ancients, that chance has so great a dominion over us, since it is by chance we live. It is not possible for any one who has not designed his life for some certain end, to dispose his particular actions; it is impossible for any one to arrange the pieces, who has not the whole form already contrived in his imagination. Of what use are colours to him that knows not what he is to paint? No one lays down a certain design for his life, and

[1] "Nothing can be regular that does not proceed from a fixed ground of reason."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, c. 26.

[2] "If the way of his life is thoroughly considered and traced out."—CICERO, *Paradox*, V. 1.

we only deliberate thereof by pieces. The archer ought first to know at what he is to aim, and then accommodate his arm, bow, string, shaft, and motion to it; our counsels deviate and wander, because not levelled to any determinate end. No wind serves him who addresses his voyage to no certain port. I cannot acquiesce in the judgment given by one in the behalf of Sophocles,[1] who concluded him capable of the management of domestic affairs, against the accusation of his son, from having read one of his tragedies.

Neither do I allow of the conjecture of the Parians,[2] sent to regulate the Milesians, sufficient for such a consequence, as they from thence derived: coming to visit the island, they took notice of such grounds as were best husbanded, and such country-houses as were best governed; and having taken the names of the owners, when they had assembled the citizens, they appointed these farmers for new governors and magistrates; concluding that they, who had been so provident in their own private concerns, would be so of the public too. We are all lumps, and of so various and inform a contexture, that every piece plays, every moment, its own game, and there is as much difference betwixt us and ourselves as betwixt us and others: "magnam rem puta, unum hominem agere."[3] Since ambition can teach men valour, temperance, and liberality, and even justice too; seeing that avarice can inspire the courage of a shop-boy, bred and nursed up in obscurity and ease, with the assurance to expose himself so far from the fireside to the mercy of the waves and angry Neptune in a frail boat; that she further teaches discretion and prudence; and that even Venus can inflate boys under the discipline of the rod with boldness and resolution, and infuse masculine courage into the heart of tender virgins in their mothers' arms:

> "Hac duce, custodes furtim transgressa jacentes,
> Ad juvenem tenebris sola puella venit:"[4]

'tis not all the understanding has to do, simply to judge us

[1] Cicero, De Senect., c. 7. [2] Herodotus, lib. v.

[3] "Esteem it a great thing always to act as one and the same man."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 120.

[4] "She leading, the tender virgin, furtively evading her guardian, steals in the dark to her young lover's arms."—TIBULLUS, ii. 1, 75.

by our outward actions; it must penetrate the very soul, and there discover by what springs the motion is guided. But that being a high and hazardous undertaking, I could wish that fewer would attempt it.

CHAPTER II.

OF DRUNKENNESS.

THE world is nothing but variety and dissemblance: vices are all alike, as they are vices, and peradventure the Stoics understand them so; but although they are equally vices, yet they are not all equal vices; and he who has transgressed the ordinary bounds a hundred paces,

> "Quos ultra, citraque nequit consistere rectum,"[1]

should not be in a worse condition than he that has advanced but ten, is not to be believed; or that sacrilege is not worse than stealing a cabbage:

> "Nec vincet ratio hoc, tantumdem ut peccet, idemque,
> Qui teneros caules alieni fregerit horti,
> Et qui nocturnus divum sacra legerit."[2]

There is in this as great diversity as in anything whatever. The confounding of the order and measure of sins is dangerous: murderers, traitors, and tyrants get too much by it, and it is not reasonable they should flatter their consciences, because another man is idle, lascivious, or not assiduous at his devotion. Every one lays weight upon the sin of his companions, but lightens his own. Our very instructors themselves rank them sometimes, in my opinion, very ill. As Socrates said that the principal office of wisdom was to distinguish good from evil, we, the best of whom are

[1] "Beyond or within which, right is not."—HORACE, *Sat.* i. 1, 107.

[2] Idem, ibid., iii. 1, 115. The sense is given in the preceding passage of the text.

vicious, ought also to say the same of the science of distinguishing betwixt vice and vice, without which, and that very exactly performed, the virtuous and the wicked will remain confounded and unrecognised.

Now, amongst the rest, drunkenness seems to me to be a gross and brutish vice. The soul has greater part in the rest, and there are some vices that have something, if a man may so say, of generous in them; there are vices wherein there is a mixture of knowledge, diligence, valour, prudence, dexterity, and address; this one is totally corporeal and earthly. And the rudest nation this day in Europe is that alone where it is in fashion. Other vices discompose the understanding: this totally overthrows it and renders the body stupid.

"Cum vini vis penetravit . . .
Consequitur gravitas membrorum, præpediuntur
Crura vacillanti, tardescit lingua, madet mens,
Nant oculi; clamor, singultus, jurgia, gliscunt." [1]

The worst state of man is that wherein he loses the knowledge and government of himself. And 'tis said, amongst other things upon this subject, that, as the must fermenting in a vessel, works up to the top whatever it has in the bottom, so wine, in those who have drunk beyond measure, vents the most inward secrets.

"Tu sapientium
Curas et arcanum jocoso
Consilium retegis Lyæo." [2]

Josephus tells us that by giving an ambassador the enemy had sent to him his full dose of liquor, he wormed out his secrets. And yet, Augustus, committing the most inward secrets of his affairs to Lucius Piso, who conquered Thrace, never found him faulty in the least, no more than Tiberius did Cossus, with whom he intrusted his whole counsels, though we know they were both so given to drink that they

[1] "When the power of wine has penetrated us, a heaviness of the limbs follows, the legs of the tottering person are impeded; the tongue grows torpid, the mind is dimmed, the eyes swim, noise, hiccup, and quarrels arise."—LUCRETIUS, i. 3, 475.

[2] "Thou in thy cups blabbest out the secret counsels of the wise."—HORACE, *Od.* xxi. 1, 14.

have often been fain to carry both the one and the other drunk out of the Senate.

"Hesterno inflatum venas, de more, Lyæo."[1]

And the design of killing Cæsar was as safely communicated to Cimber, though he would often be drunk, as to Cassius, who drank nothing but water.[2] We see our Germans, when drunk as the devil, know their post, remember the word, and keep to their ranks:

"Nec facilis victoria de madidis, et
Blæsis, atque mero titubantibus."[3]

I could not have believed there had been so profound, senseless, and dead a degree of drunkenness had I not read in history that Attalus, having, to put a notable affront upon him, invited to supper the same Pausanias, who upon the very same occasion afterwards killed Philip of Macedon, a king who by his excellent qualities gave sufficient testimony of his education in the house and company of Epaminondas, made him drink to such a pitch that he could after abandon his beauty, as of a hedge strumpet, to the muleteers and servants of the basest office in the house. And I have been further told by a lady whom I highly honour and esteem, that near Bordeaux and about Castres where she lives, a country woman, a widow of chaste repute, perceiving in herself the first symptoms of breeding, innocently told her neighbours that if she had a husband she should think herself with child; but the causes of suspicion every day more and more increasing, and at last growing up to a manifest proof, the poor woman was reduced to the necessity of causing it to be proclaimed in her parish church, that whoever had done that deed and would frankly confess it, she did not only promise to forgive, but moreover to marry him, if he liked the motion; whereupon a young fellow that served her in the quality of a labourer, encouraged by this

[1] "Their veins yet full, as usual, of yesterday's wine."—VIRGIL, *Ecl.* VI. 15.

[2] As to which Cassius pleasantly said: "What, shall I bear a tyrant, I who cannot bear wine?"

[3] "Nor is a victory easily obtained over men so drunk, they can scarce speak or stand."—JUVENAL, *Sat.* xv. 47.

proclamation, declared that he had one holiday found her, having taken too much of the bottle, so fast asleep by the chimney and in so indecent a posture, that he could conveniently do his business without waking her; and they yet live together man and wife.

It is true that antiquity has not much decried this vice; the writings even of several philosophers speak very tenderly of it, and even amongst the Stoics there are some who advise folks to give themselves sometimes the liberty to drink, nay, to drunkenness, to refresh the soul.

> "Hoc quoque virtutum quondam certamine, magnum
> Socratem palmam promeruisse ferunt."[1]

That censor and reprover of others, Cato, was reproached that he was a hard drinker.

> "Narratur et prisci Catonis
> Sæpe mero caluisse virtus."[2]

Cyrus, that so renowned king, amongst the other qualities by which he claimed to be preferred before his brother Artaxerxes, urged this excellence, that he could drink a great deal more than he. And in the best governed nations this trial of skill in drinking is very much in use. I have heard Silvius, an excellent physician of Paris, say that lest the digestive faculties of the stomach should grow idle, it were not amiss once a month to rouse them by this excess, and to spur them lest they should grow dull and rusty; and one author tells us that the Persians used to consult about their most important affairs after being well warmed with wine.

My taste and constitution are greater enemies to this vice than I am; for besides that I easily submit my belief to the authority of ancient opinions, I look upon it indeed as an unmanly and stupid vice, but less malicious and hurtful than the others, which, almost all, more directly jostle public society. And if we cannot please ourselves but it must cost

[1] "And the great Socrates is said, in these drinking bouts, to have carried off the palm."—CORNEL. GALLUS., *Ep.*, i. 47.

[2] "And of the elder Cato it is said, that his virtue was often warmed with wine."—HORACE, *Od.* xxi. 3, 11.

us something, as they hold, I find this vice costs a man's conscience less than the others, besides that it is of no difficult preparation, nor hard to be found, a consideration not altogether to be despised. A man well advanced both in dignity and age, amongst three principal commodities that he said remained to him of life, reckoned to me this for one, and where would a man more justly find it than amongst the natural conveniences? But he did not take it right, for delicacy and the curious choice of wines is therein to be avoided. If you found your pleasure upon drinking of the best, you condemn yourself to the penance of drinking of the worst. Your taste must be more indifferent and free; so delicate a palate is not required to make a good toper. The Germans drink almost indifferently of all wines with delight; their business is to pour down and not to taste; and it's so much the better for them: their pleasure is so much the more plentiful and nearer at hand. Secondly, to drink, after the French fashion, but at two meals, and then very moderately, is to be too sparing of the favours of the god. There is more time and constancy required than so. The ancients spent whole nights in this exercise, and ofttimes added the day following to eke it out, and therefore we are to take greater liberty and stick closer to our work. I have seen a great lord of my time, a man of high enterprise and famous success, that without setting himself to't, and after his ordinary rate of drinking at meals, drank not much less than five quarts of wine, and at his going away appeared but too wise and discreet, to the detriment of our affairs. The pleasure we hold in esteem for the course of our lives ought to have a greater share of our time dedicated to it; we should, like shop-boys and labourers, refuse no occasion nor omit any opportunity of drinking, and always have it in our minds. Methinks we every day abridge and curtail the use of wine, and that the after breakfasts, dinner snatches, and collations I used to see in my father's house, when I was a boy, were more usual and frequent then than now.

Is it that we pretend to a reformation? Truly, no: but it may be we are more addicted to Venus than our fathers were. They are two exercises that thwart and hinder one another in their vigour. Lechery weakens our stomach on

the one side, and on the other, sobriety renders us more spruce and amorous for the exercise of love.

'Tis not to be imagined what strange stories I have heard my father tell of the chastity of that age wherein he lived. It was for him to say it, being both by art and nature cut out and finished for the service of ladies. He spoke well and little; ever mixing his language with some illustration out of authors most in use, especially in Spanish. Marcus Aurelius[1] was very frequent in his mouth. His behaviour was grave, humble, and very modest; he was very solicitous of neatness and propriety both in his person and clothes, whether on horseback or afoot: he was monstrously punctual of his word; and of a conscience and religion generally tending rather towards superstition than otherwise. For a man of little stature, very strong, well proportioned, and well knit; of a pleasing countenance, inclining to brown, and very adroit in all noble exercises. I have yet in the house to be seen canes poured full of lead, with which they say he exercised his arms for throwing the bar or the stone, or in fencing; and shoes with leaden soles to make him lighter for running or leaping. Of his vaulting he has left little miracles behind him: I have seen him when past threescore laugh at our exercises, and throw himself in his furred gown into the saddle, make the tour of a table upon his thumbs, and scarce ever mount the stairs into his chamber without taking three or four steps at a time. But as to what I was speaking of before, he said there was scarce one woman of quality of ill fame in a whole province: he would tell of strange privacies, and some of them his own, with virtuous women, free from any manner of suspicion of ill; and for his own part solemnly swore he was a virgin at his marriage; and yet it was after a long practice of arms beyond the mountains, of which wars he left us a journal under his own hand, wherein he has given a precise account from point to point of all passages, both relating to the public and to himself. And he was, moreover, married at a well advanced maturity, in the year 1528, the three-and-thirtieth year of his age, upon his way home from Italy. But let us return to our bottle.

[1] Guevara's Marcus Aurelius.

The incommodities of old age, that stand in need of some refreshment and support, might with reason beget in me a desire of this faculty, it being as it were the last pleasure the course of years deprives us of. The natural heat, say the good-fellows, first seats itself in the feet: that concerns infancy; thence it mounts into the middle region, where it makes a long abode and produces, in my opinion, the sole true pleasures of human life; all other pleasures in comparison sleep; towards the end, like a vapour that still mounts upward, it arrives at the throat, where it makes its final residence, and concludes the progress. I do not, nevertheless, understand how a man can extend the pleasure of drinking beyond thirst, and forge in his imagination an appetite artificial and against nature; my stomach would not proceed so far; it has enough to do to deal with what it takes in for its necessity. My constitution is not to care for drink but as following eating and washing down my meat, and for that reason my last draught is always the greatest. And seeing that in old age we have our palate furred with phlegms or depraved by some other ill constitution, the wine tastes better to us as the pores are cleaner washed and laid more open. At least, I seldom taste the first glass well. Anacharsis wondered[1] that the Greeks drank in greater glasses towards the end of a meal than at the beginning; which was, I suppose, for the same reason the Germans do the same, who then begin the battle of drink.

Plato[2] forbids children wine till eighteen years of age, and to get drunk till forty; but, after forty, gives them leave to please themselves, and to mix a little liberally in their feasts the influence of Dionysos, that good deity who restores to younger men their gaiety, and to old men their youth; who mollifies the passions of the soul, as iron is softened by fire; and in his Laws allows such merry meetings, provided they have a discreet chief to govern and keep them in order, as good and of great utility; drunkenness being, he says, a true and certain trial of every one's nature, and, withal, fit to inspire old men with mettle to divert themselves in dancing and music; things of great use, and that

[1] Diogenes Laertius, i. 104. [2] Laws, ii.

they dare not attempt when sober. He, moreover, says that wine is able to supply the soul with temperance and the body with health. Nevertheless, these restrictions, in part borrowed from the Carthaginians, please him:[1] that men forbear excesses in the expeditions of war; that every judge and magistrate abstain from it when about the administrations of his place or the consultations of the public affairs; that the day is not to be employed with it, that being a time due to other occupations, nor the night on which a man intends to get children.

'Tis said that the philosopher Stilpo, when oppressed with age, purposely hastened his end by drinking pure wine.[2] The same thing, but not designed by him, despatched also the philosopher Arcesilaus.[3]

But, 'tis an old and pleasant question, whether the soul of a wise man can be overcome by the strength of wine?

"Si munitæ adhibet vim sapientiæ."[4]

To what vanity does the good opinion we have of ourselves push us? The most regular and most perfect soul in the world has but too much to do to keep itself upright, and from being overthrown by its own weakness. There is not one of a thousand that is right and settled so much as one minute in a whole life, and that may not very well doubt, whether according to her natural condition she ever can be; but to join constancy to it is her utmost perfection; I mean when nothing should jostle and discompose her, which a thousand accidents may do. 'Tis to much purpose that the great poet Lucretius keeps such a clatter with his philosophy, when, behold! he goes mad with a love philtre. Is it to be imagined that an apoplexy will not stun Socrates as well as a porter? Some men have forgotten their own names by the violence of a disease; and a slight wound has turned the judgment of others topsey-turvey. Let him be as wise as he will, after all he is but a man; and than that what is there more frail, more miserable, or more nothing? Wisdom does not force our natural dispositions.

[1] Laws, ii. [2] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 120. [3] Idem, iv. 44.
[4] Horace, Od. iii. 28, 4. The sense is in the preceding passage of the text.

"Sudores itaque, et pallorem exsistere toto
Corpore, et infringi linguam, vocemque aboriri,
Caligare oculos, sonere aures, succidere artus,
Denique concidere, ex animi terrore, videmus:"[1]

he must shut his eyes against the blow that threatens him; he must tremble upon the margin of a precipice, like a child; nature having reserved these light marks of her authority, not to be forced by our reason and the stoic virtue, to teach man his mortality and our weakness; he turns pale with fear, red with shame, and groans with the cholic, if not with desperate outcry, at least with hoarse and broken voice:

"Humani a se nihil alienum putet."[2]

The poets, that feign all things at pleasure, dare not acquit their greatest heroes of tears:

"Sic fatur lacrymans, classique immittit habenas."[3]

'Tis sufficient for a man to curb and moderate his inclinations, for totally to suppress them is not in him to do. Even our great Plutarch, that excellent and perfect judge of human actions, when he sees Brutus and Torquatus kill their children, begins to doubt whether virtue could proceed so far, and to question whether these persons had not rather been stimulated by some other passion.[4] All actions exceeding the ordinary bounds are liable to sinister interpretation, forasmuch as our liking no more holds with what is above than with what is below it.

Let us leave that other sect, that sets up an express profession of scornful superiority:[5] but when even in that sect,[6]

[1] "Sweat and paleness come over the whole body, the tongue is rendered powerless, the voice dies away, the eyes are darkened, there is ringing in the ears, the limbs sink under us by the influence of fear."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 155.

[2] "Let him not think himself exempt from that which is incidental to other men."—TERENCE, *Heauton.*, i. 1, 25.

[3] "Thus said he, weeping, and then set sail with his fleet."—VIRGIL, *Æneid*, vi. 1.

[4] Plutarch, Life of Publicola, c. 3.

[5] The Stoics. Cotton wrote: "Let us leave this other sect, *and make a downright profession of fierceness.*"

[6] The Epicureans.

reputed the most quiet and gentle, we hear these rhodomontades of Metrodorus: "Occupavi te, Fortuna, atque cepi: omnesque aditus tuos interclusi ut ad me aspirare non posses;"[1] when Anaxarchus, by command of Nicocreon the tyrant of Cyprus, was put into a stone mortar, and laid upon with mauls of iron, ceases not to say, "Strike, batter, break, 'tis not Anaxarchus, 'tis but his sheath that you pound and bray so;"[2] when we hear our martyrs cry out to the tyrant in the middle of the flame; "this side is roasted enough, fall to and eat, it is enough done; fall to work with the other;"[3] when we hear the child in Josephus[4] torn piece-meal with pincers, defying Antiochus, and crying out with a constant and assured voice: "Tyrant, thou losest thy labour, I am still at ease; where is the pain, where are the torments with which thou didst so threaten me? Is this all thou canst do? My constancy torments thee more than thy cruelty does me. O pitiful coward, thou faintest, and I grow stronger; make me complain, make me bend, made me yield if thou canst; encourage thy guards, cheer up thy executioners; see, see they faint, and can do no more; arm them, flesh them anew, spur them up;" truly, a man must confess that there is some phrenzy, some fury, how holy soever, that at that time possesses those souls. When we come to these Stoical sallies: "I had rather be mad than voluptuous," a saying of Antisthenes; *Μανεἰην μαλλον, ἠ ἡσθειην*.[5] When Sextius tells us, "he had rather be fettered with affliction than pleasure:" when Epicurus takes upon him to play with his gout, and, refusing health and ease, defies all torments, and despising the lesser pains, as disdaining to contend with them, he covets and calls out for others sharper, more violent, and more worthy of him;

> "Spumantemque dari, pecora inter inertia, votis
> Optat aprum, aut fulvum descendere monte leonem:"[6]

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[1] "Fortune, I have got the better of thee, and have made all the avenues so sure thou canst not come at me."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 9.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, ix. 58.

[3] This is what Prudentius makes St. Laurence say, in his book entitled *Περι στεφανων* (concerning Crowns), Hymn ii. 401.

[4] Doe Macc., c. 8. [5] Aulus Gellius, ix. 5.

[6] "And instead of timid beasts, wishes some yellow lion or foaming boar would come from the mountain."—*Æneid*, iv. 158.

who but must conclude that these are wild sallies pushed on by a courage that has broken loose from its place? Our soul cannot from her own seat reach so high; 'tis necessary she must leave it, raise herself up, and, taking the bridle in her teeth, transport her man so far that he shall afterwards himself be astonished at what he has done; as, in war, the heat of battle impels generous soldiers to perform things of so infinite danger, as afterwards, recollecting them, they themselves are the first to wonder at; as it also fares with the poets, who are often rapt with admiration of their own writings, and know not where again to find the track through which they performed so fine a career; which also is in them called fury and rapture. And as Plato says,[1] 'tis to no purpose for a sober-minded man to knock at the door of poesy: so Aristotle says[2] that no excellent soul is exempt from a mixture of madness; and he has reason to call all transports, how commendable soever, that surpass our own judgment and understanding, madness; forasmuch as wisdom is a regular government of the soul, which is carried on with measure and proportion, and for which she is to herself responsible. Plato[3] argues thus, that the faculty of the prophesying is so far above us, that we must be out of ourselves when we meddle with it, and our prudence must either be obstructed by sleep or sickness, or lifted from her place by some celestial rapture.

CHAPTER III.

A CUSTOM OF THE ISLE OF CEA.[4]

If to philosophise be, as 'tis defined, to doubt, much more to write at random and play the fool, as I do, ought to be

[1] Seneca, De Tranquillitate Animi, c. 15.
[2] Problems, sect. 30.
[3] Timæus.
[4] See Nodier, p. 209. Charron seems to have recollected the maxim that "imitation is the sincerest flattery." But Pascal evidently studied this chapter very attentively, and in his Pensées has borrowed several hints from it.

reputed doubting, for it is for novices and freshmen to inquire and to dispute, and for the chairman to moderate and determine. My moderator is the authority of the divine will, that governs us without contradiction, and that is seated above these vain and human contestations.

Philip having forcibly entered into Peloponnesus, and some one saying to Damidas that the Lacedæmonians were likely very much to suffer if they did not in time reconcile themselves to his favour: "Why, you pitiful fellow," replied he, "what can they suffer who do not fear to die?" It being also asked of Agis, which way a man might live free? "Why," said he, "by despising death." These, and a thousand other sayings to the same purpose, distinctly sound of something more than the patient attending the stroke of death when it shall come; for there are several accidents in life far worse to suffer than death itself. Witness the Lacedæmonian boy taken by Antigonus, and sold for a slave, who being by his master commanded to some base employment: "Thou shalt see," says the boy, "whom thou hast bought; it would be a shame for me to serve, being so near the reach of liberty," and having so said, threw himself from the top of the house. Antipater severely threatening the Lacedæmonians, that he might the better incline them to acquiesce in a certain demand of his: "If thou threatenest us with more than death," replied they, "we shall the more willingly die;" and to Philip, having written them word that he would frustrate all their enterprises; "What, wilt thou also hinder us from dying?" This is the meaning of the sentence,[1] That the wise man lives as long as he ought, not so long as he can; and that the most obliging present Nature has made us, and which takes from us all colour of complaint of our condition, is to have delivered into our own custody the keys of life; she has only ordered one door into life, but a hundred thousand ways out. We may be straightened for earth to live upon, but earth sufficient to die upon can never be wanting, as Boiocalus answered the Romans.[2] Why dost thou complain of this world? it detains thee not; thy own cowardice is the cause, if thou livest in pain. There needs no more to die but to will to die:

[1] Seneca, Ep., 70.

[2] Tacitus, Annal. xiii. 56.

"Ubique mors est; optime hoc cavit deus.
Eripere vitam nemo non homini potest;
At nemo mortem: mille ad hanc aditus patent."[1]

Neither is it a recipe for one disease only;[2] death is the infallible cure of all; 'tis a most assured port that is never to be feared, and very often to be sought. It comes all to one, whether a man give himself his end, or stays to receive it by some other means; whether he pays before his day, or stay till his day of payment come; from whencesoever it comes, it is still his; in what part soever the thread breaks, there's the end of the clue. The most voluntary death is the finest. Life depends upon the pleasure of others; death upon our own. We ought not to accommodate ourselves to our own humour in anything so much as in this. Reputation is not concerned in such an enterprise; 'tis folly to be concerned by any such apprehension. Living is slavery if the liberty of dying be wanting. The ordinary method of cure is carried on at the expense of life; they torment us with caustics, incisions, and amputations of limbs; they interdict aliment and exhaust our blood; one step farther and we are cured indeed and effectually. Why is not the jugular vein as much at our disposal as the median vein? For a desperate disease a desperate cure. Servius the grammarian, being tormented with the gout, could think of no better remedy than to apply poison to his legs,[3] to deprive them of their sense; let them be gouty at their will, so they were insensible of pain. God gives us leave enough to go when He is pleased to reduce us to such a condition that to live is far worse than to die. 'Tis weakness to truckle under infirmities, but it's madness to nourish them. The Stoics say,[4] that it is living according to nature in a wise man to take his leave of life, even in the height of prosperity, if he do it opportunely; and in a fool to prolong it, though he be miserable, provided he be not indigent of those things which they repute to be according to nature. As I do not offend the law against thieves when I embezzle

[1] "Death is everywhere: heaven has well provided for that. Any one may deprive us of life; no one can deprive us of death. To death there are a thousand avenues."—SENECA, *Theb.*, i. 1, 151.
[2] Seneca, Ep., 69, 71.
[3] Pliny, Nat. Hist., xxv. 3.
[4] Cicero, De Finib., iii. 18.

my own money and cut my own purse; nor that against incendiaries when I burn my own wood; so am I not under the lash of those made against murderers for having deprived myself of my own life. Hegesias said,[1] that as the condition of life did, so the condition of death ought to depend upon our own choice. And Diogenes meeting the philosopher Speusippus, so blown up with an inveterate dropsy that he was fain to be carried in a litter, and by him saluted with the compliment, "I wish you good health." "No health to thee," replied the other, "who art content to live in such a condition."[2] And in fact, not long after, Speusippus, weary of so languishing a state of life, found a means to die.

But this does not pass without admitting a dispute: for many are of opinion that we cannot quit this garrison of the world without the express command of Him who has placed us in it; and that it appertains to God who has placed us here, not for ourselves only but for His glory and the service of others, to dismiss us when it shall best please Him, and not for us to depart without His licence: that we are not born for ourselves only, but for our country also, the laws of which require an account from us upon the score of their own interest, and have an action of man-slaughter good against us; and if these fail to take cognisance of the fact, we are punished in the other world as deserters of our duty:

> "Proxima deinde tenent mæsti loca, qui sibi letum
> Insontes peperere manu, lucemque perosi
> Proiecere animas."[3]

There is more constancy in suffering the chain we are tied to than in breaking it, and more pregnant evidence of fortitude in Regulus than in Cato; 'tis indiscretion and impatience that push us on to these precipices: no accidents can make true virtue turn her back; she seeks and requires evils, pains, and grief, as the things by which she is

[1] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 94. [2] Idem, iv. 3.

[3] "In the next place, come those melancholic souls, who, though free from guilt, were by their own hands slain, and, hating light, sought death."—*Æneid*, vi. 434.

nourished and supported; the menaces of tyrants, racks, and tortures serve only to animate and rouse her:

"Duris ut ilex tonsa bipennibus
Nigræ feraci frondis in Algido,
Per damna, per cædes, ab ipso
Ducit opes, animumque ferro."[1]

And as another says:—

"Non est, ut putas, virtus, pater,
Timere vitam; sed malis ingentibus
Obstare, nec se vertere, ac retro dare."[2]

Or as this:—

"Rebus in adversis facile est contemnere mortem:
Fortius ille facit, qui miser esse potest."[3]

'Tis cowardice, not virtue, to lie squat in a furrow, under a tomb, to evade the blows of fortune; virtue never stops nor goes out of her path, for the greatest storm that blows:

"Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinæ."[4]

For the most part, the flying from other inconveniences brings us to this; nay, endeavouring to evade death, we often run into its very mouth:

"Hic, rogo, non furor est, ne moriare, mori?"[5]

like those who, for fear of a precipice, throw themselves headlong into it;

[1] "As in Mount Algidus, the sturdy oak even from the axe's hard stroke derives new vigour, and spreads, by amputations, a fuller and richer head."—HORACE, *Od.*, iv. 4, 57.

[2] "Father, 'tis no virtue to fear to live; virtue consists in withstanding great evils, and not in retiring and shrinking from them." SENECA, *Theb.*, i. 190.

[3] "The wretched may well despise and laugh at death; but he is braver far who can live wretched."—MARTIAL, xi. 56, 15.

[4] "Should the world's axis crack, the ruins will but crush a fearless head."—HORACE, *Od.*, iii. 3, 7.

[5] "Tell me, is it not madness, that one should die for fear of dying?"—MARTIAL, ii. 80, 2.

"Multos in summa pericula misit
Venturi timor ipse mali: fortissimus ille est,
Qui promptus metuenda pati, si cominus instent,
Et differre potest."[1]

"Usque adeo, mortis formidine, vitæ
Percipit humanos odium, lucisque videndæ,
Ut sibi consciscant mœrenti pectore lethum,
Obliti fontem curarum hunc esse timorem."[2]

Plato, in his laws, assigns an ignominious sepulture to him who has deprived his nearest and best friend, namely himself, of life and his destined course, being neither compelled so to do by public judgment, by any sad and inevitable accident of fortune, nor by any insupportable disgrace, but merely pushed on by cowardice, and the imbecility of a timorous soul. And the opinion that makes so little of life, is ridiculous; for it is our being, 'tis all we have. Things of a nobler and more elevated being may, indeed, reproach ours; but it is against nature for us to contemn and make little account of ourselves; 'tis a disease particular to man, and not discerned in any other creatures, to hate and despise itself. And it is a vanity of the same stamp to desire to be something else than what we are; the effect of such a desire does not at all touch us, forasmuch as it is contradicted and hindered in itself. He that desires of a man to be made an angel, does nothing for himself; he would be never the better for it; for, being no more, who shall rejoice or be sensible of this benefit for him?

"Debet enim, misere cui forte, ægreque futurum est,
Ipse quoque esse in eo tum tempore, cum male possit
Accidere."[3]

Security, indolence, impassibility, the privation of the

[1] "The fear of future ills often makes men run into extreme danger; he is truly brave who boldly dares withstand the mischiefs he apprehends, when they confront him, and can be deferred."—LUCAN, vii. 104.

[2] "Death to that degree so frightens some men, that causing them to hate both life and light, they kill themselves, miserably forgetting that this same fear is the fountain of their cares."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 79.

[3] "For he to whom misery and pain are to be in the future, must himself then exist, when these ills befal him."—*Idem, ibid.*, 874.

evils of this life, which we pretend to purchase at the price of dying, are of no manner of advantage to us: that man evades war to very little purpose, who can have no fruition of peace; and as little to the purpose does he avoid trouble who cannot enjoy repose.

Amongst those of the first of these two opinions, there has been great debate, what occasions are sufficient to justify the meditation of self-murder, which they call εὔλογον ἐξαγωγὴν.[1] For though they say that men must often die for trivial causes, seeing those that detain us in life are of no very great weight, yet there is to be some limit. There are fantastic and senseless humours that have prompted not only individual men, but whole nations to destroy themselves, of which I have elsewhere given some examples; and we further read of the Milesian virgins, that, by a furious compact, they hanged themselves one after another till the magistrate took order in it, enacting that the bodies of such as should be found so hanged, should be drawn by the same halter stark naked through the city.[2] When Threicion[3] tried to persuade Cleomenes to despatch himself, by reason of the ill posture of his affairs, and, having missed a death of more honour in the battle he had lost, to accept of this the second in honour to it. and not to give the conquerors leisure to make him undergo an ignominious death or an infamous life; Cleomenes, with a courage truly Stoic and Lacedæmonian, rejected his counsel as unmanly and mean; "that," said he, "is a remedy that can never be wanting, but which a man is never to make use of whilst there is an inch of hope remaining:" telling him, "that it was sometimes constancy and valour to live; that he would that even his death should be of use to his country, and would make of it an act of honour and virtue." Threicion, notwithstanding, thought himself in the right, and did his own business; and Cleomenes afterwards did the same, but not till he had first tried the utmost malevolence of fortune. All the inconveniences in the world are not considerable enough that a man should die to evade them; and,

[1] "A reasonable exit."—DIOGENES LAERTIUS, *Life of Zeno.*
[2] Plutarch, Virtuous Deeds of Women.
[3] Idem, Life of Cleomenes, calls him Therycion.

besides, there being so many, so sudden and unexpected changes in human things, it is hard rightly to judge when we are at the end of our hope.

"Sperat et in sæva victus gladiator arena,
Sit licet infesto pollice turba minax."[1]

All things, says an old adage,[2] are to be hoped for by a man whilst he lives; ay, but, replies Seneca, why should this rather be always running in a man's head that fortune can do all things for the living man, than this, that fortune has no power over him that knows how to die? Josephus,[3] when engaged in so near and apparent danger, a whole people being violently bent against him, that there was no visible means of escape, nevertheless, being, as he himself says, in this extremity counselled by one of his friends to despatch himself, it was well for him that he yet maintained himself in hope, for fortune diverted the accident beyond all human expectation, so that he saw himself delivered without any manner of inconvenience. Whereas Brutus and Cassius, on the contrary, threw away the remains of the Roman liberty, of which they were the sole protectors, by the precipitation and temerity wherewith they killed themselves before the due time and a just occasion. Monsieur d'Anguien,[4] at the battle of Cerisolles,[5] twice attempted to run himself through, despairing of the fortune of the day, which went indeed very untowardly on that side of the field where he was engaged, and by that precipitation was very near depriving himself of the enjoyment of so brave a victory. I have seen a hundred hares escape out of the very teeth of the greyhounds. "Aliquis carnifici suo superstes fuit."[6]

"Multa dies, variusque labor mutabilis ævi
Rettulit in melius; multos alterna revisens
Lusit, et in solido rursus fortuna locavit."[7]

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[1] "The gladiator conquered in the lists hopes on, though the menacing spectators, turning their thumb, order him to die."—PENTADIUS, *De Spe, ap.* VIRGIL, *Catalecta.*

[2] Seneca, Ep., 70.

[3] Josephus, De Vitâ Suâ.

[4] Montluc, Comment.

[5] In 1544.

[6] "Some have survived their executioners."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 13.

[7] "Length of days, and the various labour of changeful time,

Pliny says there are but three sorts of diseases, to escape which a man has good title to destroy himself; the worst of which is the stone in the bladder, when the urine is suppressed.[1] Seneca says those only which for a long time are discomposing the functions of the soul. And some there have been who, to avoid a worse death, have chosen one to their own liking. Democritus, general of the Ætolians, being brought prisoner to Rome, found means to make his escape by night: but close pursued by his keepers, rather than suffer himself to be retaken, he fell upon his own sword and died.[2] Antinous and Theodotus, their city of Epirus being reduced by the Romans to the last extremity, gave the people counsel universally to kill themselves; but, these preferring to give themselves up to the enemy, the two chiefs went to seek the death they desired, rushing furiously upon the enemy, with intention to strike home but not to ward a blow. The Island of Goza being taken some years ago by the Turks, a Sicilian, who had two beautiful daughters marriageable, killed them both with his own hand, and their mother, running in to save them, to boot, which having done, sallying out of the house with a cross-bow and harquebus, with two shots he killed two of the Turks nearest to his door, and drawing his sword, charged furiously in amongst the rest, where he was suddenly enclosed and cut to pieces, by that means delivering his family and himself from slavery and dishonour. The Jewish women, after having circumcised their children, threw them and themselves down a preci-

have brought things to a better state; fortune turning, shows a reverse face, and again restores men to prosperity."—*Æneid*, xi. 425.

[1] "In the quarto edition of these essays, in 1588, Pliny is said to mention two more, viz., a pain in the stomach, and the headache, which, he says (lib. xxv. c. 3), were the only three distempers, almost, for which men killed themselves: as to their right of killing themselves, he does not mention a word of it here; and I cannot conceive why Montaigne, who, at first, entered thoroughly into Pliny's sense, by saying that, according to this author, it was the custom for men to kill themselves, in order to be rid of any one of these three distempers, made him say afterwards, that they had a right to kill themselves for this very end."—COSTE.

[2] Livy, xxxvii. 46.

pice to avoid the cruelty of Antigonus. I have been told of a person of condition in one of our prisons, that his friends, being informed that he would certainly be condemned, to avoid the ignominy of such a death suborned a priest to tell him that the only means of his deliverance was to recommend himself to such a saint, under such and such vows, and to fast eight days together without taking any manner of nourishment, what weakness or faintness soever he might find in himself during the time; he followed their advice, and by that means destroyed himself before he was aware, not dreaming of death or any danger in the experiment. Scribonia advising her nephew Libo to kill himself rather than await the stroke of justice, told him[1] that it was to do other people's business to preserve his life to put it after into the hands of those who within three or four days would fetch him to execution; and that it was to serve his enemies to keep his blood to gratify their malice. ...

We read in the Bible that Nicanor,[2] the persecutor of the law of God, having sent his soldiers to seize upon the good old man Razis, surnamed in honour of his virtue the father of the Jews: the good man, seeing no other remedy, his gates burned down, and the enemy ready to seize him, choosing rather to die nobly than to fall into the hands of his wicked adversaries and suffer himself to be cruelly butchered by them, contrary to the honour of his rank and quality, stabbed himself with his own sword, but the blow, for haste, not having been given home, he ran and threw himself from the top of a wall headlong among them, who separating themselves and making room, he pitched directly upon his head; notwithstanding which, feeling yet in himself some remains of life, he renewed his courage, and starting up upon his feet all bloody and wounded as he was, and making his way through the crowd to a precipitous rock, there, through one of his wounds drew out his bowels which, tearing and pulling to pieces with both his hands, he threw amongst his pursuers, all the while attesting and invoking the Divine vengeance upon them for their cruelty and injustice.

[1] Seneca, Ep., 70.

[2] Machabees, xiv. 37.

Of violences offered to the conscience, that against the chastity of woman is, in my opinion, most to be avoided, forasmuch as there is a certain pleasure naturally mixed with it, and for that reason the dissent therein cannot be sufficiently perfect and entire, so that the violence seems to be mixed with a little consent of the forced party. The ecclesiastical history has several examples of devout persons who have embraced death to secure them from the outrages prepared by tyrants against their religion and honour. Pelagia and Sophronia, both canonised, the first of these precipitated herself with her mother and sisters into the river to avoid being forced by some soldiers, and the last also killed herself to avoid being ravished by the Emperor Maxentius.

It may, peradventure, be an honour to us in future ages, that a learned author of this present time, and a Parisian, takes a great deal of pains to persuade the ladies of our age rather to take any other course than to enter into the horrid meditation of such a despair. I am sorry he had never heard, that he might have inserted it amongst his other stories, the saying of a woman, which was told me at Toulouse, who had passed through the handling of some soldiers: "God be praised," said she, "that once at least in my life, I have had my fill without sin." In truth, these cruelties are very unworthy the French good nature, and also, God be thanked, our air is very well purged of them since this good advice: 'tis enough that they say "no" in doing it, according to the rule of the good Marot.[1]

History is everywhere full of those who by a thousand ways have exchanged a painful and irksome life for death. Lucius Aruntius killed himself, to fly, he said, both the future and the past.[2] Granius Silvanus and Statius Proximus, after having been pardoned by Nero, killed themselves;[3] either disdaining to live by the favour of so wicked a man, or that they might not be troubled, at some other time, to obtain a second pardon, considering the proclivity of his nature to suspect and credit accusations

[1] "Un doulx nenny, avec un doulx sourire
Est tant honneste."—MAROT.

[2] Tacitus, Annal., vi. 48. [3] Idem, ibid., xv. 71.

against worthy men. Spargapises, the son of Queen Tomyris, being a prisoner of war to Cyrus, made use of the first favour Cyrus showed him, in commanding him to be unbound, to kill himself, having pretended to no other benefit of liberty, but only to be revenged of himself for the disgrace of being taken.[1] Bogez, Governor in Eion for King Xerxes, being besieged by the Athenian army under the conduct of Cimon, refused the conditions offered, that he might safe return into Asia with all his wealth, impatient to survive the loss of a place his master had given him to keep; wherefore, having defended the city to the last extremity, nothing being left to eat, he first threw all the gold and whatever else the enemy could make booty of into the river Strymon, and then causing a great pile to be set on fire, and the throats of all the women, children, concubines, and servants to be cut, he threw their bodies into the fire, and at last leaped into it himself

Ninachetuen, an Indian lord, so soon as he heard the first whisper of the Portuguese Viceroy's determination to dispossess him, without any apparent cause, of his command in Malacca, to transfer it to the King of Campar, he took this resolution with himself: he caused a scaffold, more long than broad, to be erected, supported by columns royally adorned with tapestry and strewed with flowers and abundance of perfumes; all which being prepared, in a robe of cloth of gold, set full of jewels of great value, he came out into the street, and mounted the steps to the scaffold, at one corner of which he had a pile lighted of aromatic wood. Everybody ran to see to what end these unusual preparations were made; when Ninachetuen, with a manly but displeased countenance, set forth how much he had obliged the Portuguese nation, and with how unspotted fidelity he had carried himself in his charge; that having so often, sword in hand, manifested in the behalf of others, that honour was much more dear to him than life, he was not to abandon the concern of it for himself: that fortune denying him all means of opposing the affront designed to be put upon him, his courage at least enjoined him to free himself from the sense of it, and not

[1] Herodotus, i. 213.

to serve for a fable to the people, nor for a triumph to men less deserving than himself; which having said, he leaped into the fire.

Sextilia, the wife of Scaurus, and Paxea, the wife of Labeo, to encourage their husbands to avoid the dangers that pressed upon them, wherein they had no other share than conjugal affection, voluntarily sacrificed their own lives to serve them in this extreme necessity for company and example.[1] What they did for their husbands, Cocceius Nerva did for his country, with less utility though with equal affection: this great lawyer, flourishing in health, riches, reputation, and favour with the Emperor, had no other cause to kill himself but the sole compassion of the miserable state of the Roman Republic.[2] Nothing can be added to the beauty of the death of the wife of Fulvius, a familiar favourite of Augustus: Augustus having discovered that he had vented an important secret he had intrusted him withal, one morning that he came to make his court received him very coldly and looked frowningly upon him. He returned home, full of despair, where he sorrowfully told his wife that, having fallen into this misfortune he was resolved to kill himself: to which she roundly replied, "'tis but reason you should, seeing that having so often experienced the incontinence of my tongue, you could not take warning: but let me kill myself first," and without any more saying ran herself through the body with a sword.[3] Vibius Virius, despairing of the safety of his city besieged by the Romans, and of their mercy, in the last deliberation of his city's senate, after many arguments conducing to that end, concluded that the most noble means to escape fortune was by their own hands: telling them that the enemy would have them in honour, and Hannibal would be sensible how many faithful friends he had abandoned; inviting those who approved of his advice to come to a good supper he had ready at home, where, after they had eaten well, they would drink together of what he had prepared; a beverage, said he, that will deliver our bodies from torments, our

[1] Tacitus, Annal., vi. 29. [2] Idem, ibid., 26.
[3] Plutarch on Loquacity, c. 9.

souls from insult, and our eyes and ears from the sense of so many hateful mischiefs, as the conquered suffer from cruel and implacable conquerors. I have, said he, taken order for fit persons to throw our bodies into a funeral pile before my door so soon as we are dead. Many enough approved this high resolution, but few imitated it; seven-and-twenty senators followed him, who, after having tried to drown the thought of this fatal determination in wine, ended the feast with the mortal mess; and embracing one another, after they had jointly deplored the misfortune of their country, some retired home to their own houses, others stayed to be burned with Vibius in his funeral pyre; and were all of them so long in dying, the vapour of the wine having prepossessed the veins, and by that means deferred the effect of the poison, that some of them were within an hour of seeing the enemy inside the walls of Capua, which was taken the next morning, and of undergoing the miseries they had at so dear a rate endeavoured to avoid.[1] Taurea Jubellius, another citizen of the same country, the Consul Fulvius returning from the shameful butchery he had made of two hundred and twenty-five senators, called him back fiercely by name, and having made him stop: "Give the word," said he, "that somebody may despatch me after the massacre of so many others, that thou mayest boast to have killed a much more valiant man than thyself." Fulvius disdaining him as a man out of his wits, and also having received letters from Rome censuring the inhumanity of his execution which tied his hands, Jubellius proceeded: "Since my country has been taken, my friends dead, and having with my own hands slain my wife and children to rescue them from the desolation of this ruin, I am denied to die the death of my fellow-citizens, let me borrow from virtue vengeance on this hated life," and therewithal drawing a short sword he carried concealed about him, he ran it through his own bosom, falling down backward, and expiring at the consul's feet.[2]

Alexander, laying siege to a city of the Indies, those within, finding themselves very hardly set, put on a

[1] Livy, xxvi. 1315. [2] Idem, ibid., 15.

vigorous resolution to deprive him of the pleasure of his victory, and accordingly burned themselves in general, together with their city, in despite of his humanity: a new kind of war, where the enemies sought to save them, and they to destroy themselves, doing, to make themselves sure of death, all that men do to secure life.[1]

Astapa, a city of Spain, finding itself weak in walls and defence to withstand the Romans, the inhabitants made a heap of all their riches and furniture in the public place; and, having ranged upon this heap all the women and children, and piled them round with wood and other combustible matter to take sudden fire, and left fifty of their young men for the execution of that whereon they had resolved, they made a desperate sally, where, for want of power to overcome, they caused themselves to be every man slain. The fifty, after having massacred every living soul throughout the whole city, and put fire to this pile, threw themselves lastly into it, finishing their generous liberty, rather after an insensible, than after a sorrowful and disgraceful manner, giving the enemy to understand, that if fortune had been so pleased, they had as well the courage to snatch from them victory as they had to frustrate and render it dreadful, and even mortal to those who, allured by the splendour of the gold melting in this flame, having approached it, a great number were there suffocated and burned, being kept from retiring by the crowd that followed after.[2]

The Abydeans, being pressed by King Philip, put on the same resolution; but, not having time, they could not put it in effect. The king, who was struck with horror at the rash precipitation of this execution (the treasure and movables that they had condemned to the flames being first seized), drawing off his soldiers, granted them three days' time to kill themselves in, that they might do it with more order and at greater ease: which time they filled with blood and slaughter beyond the utmost excess of all hostile cruelty, so that not so much as any one soul was left alive that had power to destroy itself.[3] There are

[1] Diodorus Siculus, xvii. 18. [2] Livy, xxviii. 22, 23.
[3] Idem, xxxi. 17, 18.

infinite examples of like popular resolutions which seem the more fierce and cruel in proportion as the effect is more universal, and yet are really less so than when singly executed; what arguments and persuasion cannot do with individual men, they can do with all, the ardour of society ravishing particular judgments.

The condemned who would live to be executed in the reign of Tiberius, forfeited their goods and were denied the rites of sepulture; those who, by killing themselves, anticipated it, were interred, and had liberty to dispose of their estates by will.[1]

But men sometimes covet death out of hope of a greater good. "I desire," says St. Paul,[2] "to be with Christ," and "who shall rid me of these bands?" Cleombrotus of Ambracia,[3] having read Plato's Phædo, entered into so great a desire of the life to come that, without any other occasion, he threw himself into the sea. By which it appears how improperly we call this voluntary dissolution, despair, to which the eagerness of hope often inclines us, and, often, a calm and temperate desire proceeding from a mature and deliberate judgment. Jacques du Chastel, bishop of Soissons, in St. Louis' foreign expedition, seeing the king and whole army upon the point of returning into France, leaving the affairs of religion imperfect, took a resolution rather to go into Paradise; wherefore, having taken solemn leave of his friends, he charged alone, in the sight of every one, into the enemy's army, where he was presently cut to pieces. In a certain kingdom of the new-discovered world, upon a day of solemn procession, when the idol they adore is drawn about in public upon a chariot of marvellous greatness; besides that many are then seen cutting off pieces of their flesh to offer to him, there are a number of others who prostrate themselves upon the place, causing themselves to be crushed and broken to pieces under the weighty wheels, to obtain the veneration of sanctity after death, which is accordingly paid them. The death of the bishop, sword in hand, has more of magnanimity in it, and less of sentiment, the ardour of combat taking away part of the latter.

[1] Tacitus, Annal., vi. 29. [2] Ep. to the Philippians, i. 23.
[3] Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., i. 34.

There are some governments who have taken upon them to regulate the justice and opportunity of voluntary death. In former times there was kept in our city of Marseilles, a poison prepared out of hemlock, at the public charge, for those who had a mind to hasten their end, having first, before the six hundred, who were their senate, given account of the reasons and motives of their design, and it was not otherwise lawful, than by leave from the magistrate and upon just occasion to do violence to themselves.[1] The same law was also in use in other places.

Sextus Pompeius, in his expedition into Asia, touched at the isle of Cea in Negropont: it happened whilst he was there, as we have it from one that was with him,[2] that a woman of great quality, having given an account to her citizens why she was resolved to put an end to her life, invited Pompeius to her death, to render it the more honourable, an invitation that he accepted; and having long tried in vain by the power of his eloquence, which was very great, and persuasion, to divert her from that design, he acquiesced in the end in her own will. She had passed the age of four score and ten in a very happy state, both of body and mind; being then laid upon her bed, better dressed than ordinary and leaning upon her elbow, "The gods," said she, "O Sextus Pompeius, and rather those I leave than those I go to seek, reward thee, for that thou hast not disdained to be both the counsellor of my life and the witness of my death. For my part, having always experienced the smiles of fortune, for fear lest the desire of living too long may make me see a contrary face, I am going, by a happy end, to dismiss the remains of my soul, leaving behind two daughters of my body and a legion of nephews;" which having said, with some exhortations to her family to live in peace, she divided amongst them her goods, and recommending her domestic gods to her eldest daughter, she boldly took the bowl that contained the poison, and having made her vows and prayers to Mercury to conduct her to some happy abode in the other world, she roundly swallowed the mortal poison.

[1] Valerius Maximus, ii. 6, 7. [2] Idem, ibid., vi. 8.

This being done, she entertained the company with the progress of its operation, and how the cold by degrees seized the several parts of her body one after another, till having in the end told them it began to seize upon her heart and bowels, she called her daughters to do the last office and close her eyes.

Pliny[1] tells us of a certain Hyperborean nation where, by reason of the sweet temperature of the air, lives rarely ended but by the voluntary surrender of the inhabitants, who, being weary of and satiated with living, had the custom, at a very old age, after having made good cheer, to precipitate themselves into the sea from the top of a certain rock, assigned for that service. Pain and the fear of a worse death seem to me the most excusable incitements.[2]

CHAPTER IV.

TO-MORROW'S A NEW DAY.

I GIVE, and I think with good reason, the palm to Jacques Amyot of all our French writers, not only for the simplicity and purity of his language, wherein he excels all others, nor for his constancy in going through so long a work,[3] nor for the depth of his knowledge, having been able so successfully to smooth and unravel so knotty and intricate an author (for let people tell me what they will, I understand nothing of Greek, but I meet with sense so well united and maintained throughout his whole translation, that certainly he either knew the true fancy of the author, or having, by being long conversant with him, imprinted a vivid and general idea of that of Plutarch in his soul, he has delivered us nothing that either derogates from or contradicts him), but above all, I am the most

[1] Nat. Hist., iv. 12.

[2] See Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., ii. 27; and Rousseau's Nouvelle Héloïse, liv. ii. lett. 1 and 2.

[3] The translation of Plutarch.

taken with him for having made so discreet a choice of a book so worthy and of so great utility wherewith to present his country. We dunces had been lost, had not this book raised us out of the dirt; by this favour of his we dare now speak and write; the ladies are able to read to schoolmasters; 'tis our breviary. If this good man be yet living, I would recommend to him Xenophon, to do as much by that; 'tis a much more easy task than the other, and consequently more proper for his age. And, besides, though I know not how, methinks he does briskly and clearly enough trip over steps another would have stumbled at, yet nevertheless his style seems to be more his own where he does not encounter those difficulties, and rolls away at his own ease.

I was just now reading this passage where Plutarch[1] says of himself, that Rusticus being present at a declamation of his at Rome, there received a packet from the emperor, and deferred to open it till all was done: for which, says he, all the company highly applauded the gravity of this person. 'Tis true, that being upon the subject of curiosity and of that eager passion for news, which makes us with so much indiscretion and impatience leave all to entertain a newcomer, and without any manner of respect or outcry, tear open on a sudden, in what company soever, the letters that are delivered to us, he had reason to applaud the gravity of Rusticus upon this occasion; and might moreover have added to it the commendation of his civility and courtesy, that would not interrupt the current of his declamation. But I doubt whether any one can commend his prudence; for receiving unexpected letters, and especially from an emperor, it might have fallen out that the deferring to read them might have been of great prejudice. The vice opposite to curiosity is negligence, to which I naturally incline, and wherein I have seen some men so extreme that one might have found letters sent them three or four days before, still sealed up in their pockets.

I never open any letters directed to another, not only those intrusted with me, but even such as fortune has guided to my hand; and am angry with myself if my eyes

[1] Of Curiosity, c. 14.

unawares steal any contents of letters of importance he is reading when I stand near a great man. Never was man less inquisitive or less prying into other men's affairs than I.

In our fathers' days, Monsieur de Boutières had like to have lost Turin from having, while engaged in good company at supper, delayed to read information that was sent him of the treason plotted against that city where he commanded. And this very Plutarch[1] has given me to understand, that Julius Cæsar had preserved himself, if, going to the Senate the day he was assassinated by the conspirators, he had read a note which was presented to him by the way. He tells also[2] the story of Archias, the tyrant of Thebes, that the night before the execution of the design Pelopidas had plotted to kill him to restore his country to liberty, he had a full account sent him in writing by another Archias, an Athenian, of the whole conspiracy, and that, this packet having been delivered to him while he sat at supper, he deferred the opening of it, saying, which afterwards turned to a proverb in Greece, "To-morrow is a new day."[3]

A wise man may, I think, out of respect to another, as not to disturb the company, as Rusticus did, or not to break off another affair of importance in hand, defer to read or hear any new thing that is brought him; but for his own interest or particular pleasure, especially if he be a public minister, that he will not interrupt his dinner or break his sleep is inexcusable. And there was anciently at Rome, the consular place,[4] as they called it, which was the most honourable at the table, as being a place of most liberty, and of more convenient access to those who came in to speak to the person seated there; by which it appears, that being at meat, they did not totally abandon the concern of other affairs and incidents. But when all is said, it is very hard in human actions to give so exact a rule upon moral reasons, that fortune will not therein maintain her own right.

[1] Life of Cæsar, c. 17.
[2] In his Treatise on the Demon of Socrates, c. 27.
[3] So in Cotton and in Coste. The French is "à demain les affaires;" business to-morrow.
[4] Plutarch, Table Talk, i. 3, 2.

CHAPTER V.

OF CONSCIENCE.

THE Sieur de la Brousse, my brother and I, travelling one day together during the time of our civil wars, met a gentleman of good fashion. He was of the contrary party, though I did not know so much, for he pretended otherwise: and the mischief on't is, that in this sort of war the cards are so shuffled, your enemy not being distinguished from yourself by any apparent mark either of language or habit, and being nourished under the same law, air and manners, it is very hard to avoid disorder and confusion. This made me afraid myself of meeting any of our troops in a place where I was not known, that I might not be in fear to tell my name, and peradventure of something worse; as it had befallen me before, where, by such a mistake, I lost both men and horses, and amongst others an Italian gentleman my page, whom I bred with the greatest care and affection, was miserably slain, in whom a youth of great promise and expectation was extinguished. But the gentleman my brother and I met had so desperate, half-dead a fear upon him at meeting with any horse, or passing by any of the towns that held for the King, that I at last discovered it to be alarms of conscience. It seemed to the poor man as if through his visor and the crosses upon his cassock, one would have penetrated into his bosom and read the most secret intentions of his heart; so wonderful is the power of conscience. It makes us betray, accuse, and fight against ourselves, and for want of other witnesses, to give evidence against ourselves.

"Occultum quatiens animo tortore flagellum."[1]

This story is in every child's mouth: Bessus the Pæonian,

[1] "The torturer of the soul brandishing a sharp scourge within." JUVENAL, iii. 195.

being reproached for wantonly pulling down a nest of young sparrows and killing them, replied, that he had reason to do so, seeing that those little birds never ceased falsely to accuse him of the murder of his father. This parricide had till then been concealed and unknown, but the revenging fury of conscience caused it to be discovered by him himself, who was to suffer for it.[1] Hesiod corrects the saying of Plato, that punishment closely follows sin, it being as he says, born at the same time with it.[2] Whoever expects punishment already suffers it, and whoever has deserved it expects it.[3] Wickedness contrives torments against itself:

"Malum consilium, consultori pessimum:"[4]

as the wasp stings and hurts another, but most of all itself, for it there loses its sting and its use for ever,

"Vitasque in vulnere ponunt."[5]

Cantharides have somewhere about them, by a contrariety of nature, a counterpoison against their poison.[6] In like manner, at the same time that men take delight in vice, there springs in the conscience a displeasure that afflicts us sleeping and waking with various tormenting imaginations:

"Quippe ubi se multi, per somnia sæpe loquentes,
Aut morbo delirantes, protraxe ferantur,
Et celata diu in medium peccata dedisse."[7]

Apollodorus dreamed that he saw himself flayed by the Scythians and afterwards boiled in a cauldron, and that his heart muttered these words: "I am the cause of all these mischiefs that have befallen thee."[8] Epicurus said that

[1] and [2] Plutarch on Divine Justice, c. viii. 9.
[3] Seneca, Ep., 105, at the end.
[4] "Ill designs are worst to the contriver."—*Apud Aul. Gellium*, iv. 5.
[5] "And leave their own lives in the wound."—VIRGIL, *Geo.*, iv. 238.
[6] Plutarch on Divine Justice, c. ix.
[7] "The guilty often, by talking in their sleep or raving in a fever, reveal sins long concealed."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1157.
[8] Apollodorus was tyrant of Cassandria, in Macedonia."—PLUTARCH, *ubi supra*, c. 9; POLYÆNUS, iv. 6, 18.

no hiding hole could conceal the wicked, since they could never assure themselves of being hid whilst their conscience discovered them to themselves.[1]

"Prima est hæc ultio, quod se
Judice nemo nocens absolvitur."[2]

As an ill conscience fills us with fear, so a good one gives us greater confidence and assurance; and I can truly say that I have gone through several hazards with a more steady pace in consideration of the secret knowledge I had of my own will and the innocence of my intentions:

"Conscia mens ut cuique sua est, ita concipit intra
Pectora pro facto spemque metumque suo."[3]

Of this are a thousand examples; but it will be enough to instance three of one and the same person. Scipio, being one day accused before the people of Rome of some crimes of a very high nature, instead of excusing himself or flattering his judges: "It will become you well," said he, "to sit in judgment upon a head, by whose means you have the power to judge all the world."[4] Another time, all the answer he gave to several impeachments brought against him by a tribune of the people, instead of making his defence: "Let us go, citizens," said he, "let us go render thanks to the gods for the victory they gave me over the Carthaginians as this day,"[5] and advancing himself before towards the Temple, he had presently all the assembly and his very accuser himself following at his heels. And Petilius, having been set on by Cato to demand an account of the money that had passed through his hands in the province of Antioch, Scipio being come into the senate to that purpose, produced a book from under his robe, wherein he told them was an exact account of his receipts and disbursements; but being required to deliver it to the prothonotary to be examined, he refused, saying, he would not do

[1] Seneca, Ep., 97.

[2] "'Tis the first punishment of sin that no man absolves himself."—JUVENAL, xiii. 2.

[3] "As a man's conscience is, so within hope or fear prevails, suiting to his design."—OVID, *Fast.*, i. 485.

[4] Plutarch, How Far a Man may Praise Himself, c. 5.

[5] Valerius Maximus, iii. 7.

himself so great a disgrace; and in the presence of the whole senate tore the book with his own hands to pieces.[1] I do not believe that the most seared conscience could have counterfeited so great an assurance. He had naturally too high a spirit and was accustomed to too high a fortune, says Titus Livius, to know how to be criminal, and to lower himself to the meanness of defending his innocence. The putting men to the rack is a dangerous invention, and seems to be rather a trial of patience than of truth. Both he who has the fortitude to endure it conceals the truth, and he who has not: for why should pain sooner make me confess what really is, than force me to say what is not? And, on the contrary, if he who is not guilty of that whereof he is accused, has the courage to undergo those torments, why should not he who is guilty have the same, so fair a reward as life being in his prospect? I believe the ground of this invention proceeds from the consideration of the force of conscience: for, to the guilty, it seems to assist the rack to make him confess his fault, and to shake his resolution; and, on the other side, that it fortifies the innocent against the torture. But when all is done, 'tis, in plain truth, a trial full of uncertainty and danger: what would not a man say, what would not a man do, to avoid so intolerable torments?

"Etiam innocentes cogit mentiri dolor."[2]

Whence it comes to pass, that him whom the judge has racked that he may not die innocent, he makes him die both innocent and racked. A thousand and a thousand have charged their own heads by false confessions, amongst whom I place Philotas, considering the circumstances of the trial Alexander put upon him and the progress of his torture.[3] But so it is that some say it is the least evil human weakness could invent; very inhumanly, notwithstanding, and to very little purpose, in my opinion.

Many nations less barbarous in this than the Greeks and Romans who call them so, repute it horrible and cruel to

[1] Livy, xxxviii. 54, 55.

[2] "Pain will make the most innocent lie."—PUBLIUS SYRUS, *De Dolore*.

[3] Quintus Curtius, vi. 7.

torment and pull a man to pieces for a fault of which they are yet in doubt. How can he help your ignorance? Are not you unjust, that, not to kill him without cause, do worse than kill him? And that this is so, do but observe how often men prefer to die without reason than undergo this examination, more painful than execution itself; and that oft-times by its extremity anticipates execution, and performs it. I know not where I had this story:[1] but it exactly matches the conscience of our justice in this particular. A country-woman, to a general of a very severe discipline,[2] accused one of his soldiers that he had taken from her children the little soup meat she had left to nourish them withal, the army having consumed all the rest; but of this proof there was none. The general, after having cautioned the woman to take good heed to what she said, for that she would make herself guilty of a false accusation if she told a lie, and she persisting, he presently caused the soldier's belly to be ripped up to clear the truth of the fact, and the woman was found to be in the right. An instructive sentence.

CHAPTER VI.

USE MAKES PERFECT.

'Tis not to be expected that argument and instruction, though we never so voluntarily surrender our belief to what is read to us, should be of force to lead us on so far as to action, if we do not, over and above, exercise and form the soul by experience to the course for which we design it; it will, otherwise, doubtless find itself at a loss when it comes to the pinch of the business. This is the reason, why those amongst the philosophers who were ambitious to attain to a greater excellence, were not contented to await the severities of fortune in the retirement and repose of their own habitations, lest she should have sur-

[1] It is in Froissart, vol. iv. c. 87. [2] Bajazet, i.

prised them raw and inexpert in the combat, but sallied out to meet her, and purposely threw themselves into the proof of difficulties. Some of them abandoned riches to exercise themselves in a voluntary poverty; others sought out labour and an austerity of life, to inure them to hardships and inconveniences; others have deprived themselves of their dearest members, as of sight, and of the instruments of generation, lest their too delightful and effeminate service should soften and debauch the stability of their souls.

But in dying, which is the greatest work we have to do, practice can give us no assistance at all. A man may by custom fortify himself against pain, shame, necessity, and such like accidents, but, as to death, we can experiment it but once, and are all apprentices when we come to it. There have, anciently, been men so excellent managers of their time that they have tried, even in death itself, to relish and taste it, and who have bent their utmost faculties of mind to discover what this passage is, but they are none of them come back to tell us the news:

> "Nemo expergitus exstat,
> Frigida quem semel est vitai pausa sequuta."[1]

Canius Julius,[2] a noble Roman, of singular constancy and virtue, having been condemned to die by that scoundrel Caligula, besides many marvellous testimonies that he gave of his resolution, as he was just going to receive the stroke of the executioner, was asked by a philsopher, a friend of his: "Well, Canius, whereabout is your soul now? what is she doing? What are you thinking of?" "I was thinking," replied the other, "to keep myself ready, and the faculties of my mind full settled and fixed, to try if in this short and quick instant of death, I could perceive the motion of the soul when she parts from the body, and whether she has any sentiment at the separation, that I may after come again, if I can, to acquaint my friends with it." This man philosophises not unto death only, but in death itself. What a strange assurance was

[1] "No one was ever known to wake who has once fallen into the cold sleep of death."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 942.

[2] See Seneca, De Tranquillitate Animi, c. 14.

this, and what bravery of courage, to desire his death should be a lesson to him, and to have leisure to think of other things in so great an affair?

"Jus hoc animi morientis habebat."[1]

And yet I fancy, there is a certain way of making it familiar to us, and in some sort of making trial what it is. We may gain experience, if not entire and perfect, yet such, at least, as shall not be totally useless to us, and that may render us more confident and more assured. If we cannot overtake it, we may approach it and view it, and if we do not advance so far as the fort, we may at least discover and make ourselves acquainted with the avenues. It is not without reason that we are taught to consider sleep as a resemblance of death: with how great facility do we pass from waking to sleeping, and with how little concern do we lose the knowledge of light and of ourselves. Peradventure, the faculty of sleeping would seem useless and contrary to nature, since it deprives us of all action and sentiment, were it not that by it nature instructs us that she has equally made us to die as to live; and in life presents to us the eternal state she reserves for us after it, to accustom us to it and to take from us the fear of it. But such as have by some violent accident fallen into a swoon, and in it have lost all sense, these, methinks, have been very near seeing the true and natural face of death; for as to the moment of the passage, it is not to be feared that it brings with it any pain or displeasure, forasmuch as we can have no feeling without leisure; our sufferings require time, which in death is so short and so precipitous, that it must necessarily be insensible. They are the approaches that we are to fear, and these may fall within the limits of experience.

Many things seem greater by imagination than they are in effect; I have passed a good part of my life in a perfect and entire health; I say, not only entire, but, moreover, sprightly and wanton. This state, so full of verdure, jollity, and vigour, made the consideration of sickness so formidable to me, that when I came to experience it, I

[1] "This mighty power of mind he had dying."—LUCAN, viii. 636.

found the attacks faint and easy in comparison with what I had apprehended. Of this I have daily experience: if I am under the shelter of a warm room, in a stormy and tempestuous night, I wonder how people can live abroad, and am afflicted for those who are out in the fields: if I am there myself, I do not wish to be anywhere else. This one thing of being always shut up in a chamber I fancied insupportable: but I was presently inured to be so imprisoned a week, nay a month together, in a very weak, disordered, and sad condition; and I have found that, in the time of my health, I much more pitied the sick, than I think myself to be pitied when I am so, and that the force of my imagination enhances near one half of the essence and reality of the thing. I hope that when I come to die I shall find it the same, and that, after all, it is not worth the pains I take, so much preparation and so much assistance as I call in, to undergo the stroke. But, at all events, we cannot give ourselves too much advantage.

In the time of our third, or second troubles (I do not well remember which), going one day abroad to take the air, about a league from my own house, which is seated in the very centre of all the bustle and mischief of the late civil wars in France; thinking myself in all security and so near to my retreat that I stood in need of no better equipage, I had taken a horse that went very easy upon his pace, but was not very strong. Being upon my return home, a sudden occasion falling out to make use of this horse in a kind of service that he was not accustomed to, one of my train, a lusty, tall fellow, mounted upon a strong German horse, that had a very ill mouth, fresh and vigorous, to play the brave and set on ahead of his fellows, comes thundering full speed in the very track where I was, rushing like a Colossus upon the little man and the little horse, with such a career of strength and weight, that he turned us both over and over, topsy-turvy with our heels in the air: so that there lay the horse overthrown and stunned with the fall, and I ten or twelve paces from him stretched out at length, with my face all battered and broken, my sword which I had had in my hand, above ten paces beyond that, and my belt broken all to pieces, without motion or sense any more than a stock. 'Twas the only

swoon I was ever in till that hour in my life. Those who were with me, after having used all the means they could to bring me to myself, concluding me dead, took me up in their arms, and carried me with very much difficulty home to my house, which was about half a French league from thence. On the way, having been for more than two hours given over for a dead man, I began to move and to fetch my breath; for so great abundance of blood was fallen into my stomach, that nature had need to rouse her forces to discharge it. They then raised me upon my feet, where I threw off a whole bucket of clots of blood, as this I did also several times by the way. This gave me so much ease, that I began to recover a little life, but so leisurely and by so small advances, that my first sentiments were much nearer the approaches of death than life:

> "Perche, dubbiosa ancor del suo ritorno,
> Non s'assicura attonita la mente."[1]

The remembrance of this accident, which is very well imprinted in my memory, so naturally representing to me the image and idea of death, has in some sort reconciled me to that untoward adventure. When I first began to open my eyes, it was with so perplexed, so weak and dead a sight, that I could yet distinguish nothing but only discern the light,

> "Come quel ch'or apre, or'chiude
> Gli occhi, mezzo tra'l sonno e l'esser desto."[2]

As to the functions of the soul, they advanced with the same pace and measure with those of the body. I saw myself all bloody, my doublet being stained all over with the blood I had vomited. The first thought that came into my mind was, that I had a harquebuss shot in my head, and, indeed, at the time there were a great many fired round about us. Methought my life but just hung upon my lips: and I shut my eyes, to help, methought, to thrust it out, and took a pleasure in languishing and

[1] "For the soul, doubtful as to its return, could not compose itself."—TASSO, *Gerus. Lib.*, xii. 74.

[2] "A man now opening, now shutting his eyes, between sleep and waking."—Idem, ibid., viii. 26.

letting myself go. It was an imagination that only superficially floated upon my soul, as tender and weak as all the rest, but really, not only exempt from anything displeasing, but mixed with that sweetness that people feel when they glide into a slumber.

I believe it is the very same condition those people are in, whom we see swoon with weakness in the agony of death; and I am of opinion that we pity them without cause, supposing them agitated with grievous dolours, or that their souls suffer under painful thoughts. It has ever been my belief, contrary to the opinion of many, and particularly of La Boetie, that those whom we see so subdued and stupefied at the approaches of their end, or oppressed with the length of the disease, or by accident of an apoplexy or falling sickness,

> "Vi morbi sæpe coactus
> Ante oculos aliquis nostros, ut fulminis ictu,
> Concidit, et spumas agit; ingemit, et fremit artus;
> Desipit, extentat nervos, torquetur, anhelat,
> Inconstanter et in jactando membra fatigat;"[1]

or hurt in the head, whom we hear to mutter, and by fits to utter grievous groans; though we gather from these signs by which it seems as if they had some remains of consciousness, and that there are movements of the body; I have always believed, I say, both the body and the soul benumbed and asleep,

> "Vivit, et est vitæ nescius ipse suæ,"[2]

and could not believe that in so great a stupefaction of the members and so great a defection of the senses, the soul could maintain any force within to take cognisance of herself, and that, therefore, they had no tormenting reflections to make them consider and be sensible of the misery of their condition, and consequently were not much to be pitied.

[1] "Compelled by the force of disease, we often see men as thunder-struck, fall, groan, and foam, tremble, stretch, writhe, breathe short, and in strugglings tire out their strength."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 485.

[2] "He lives, but does not know that he is alive."—OVID, *Trist.*, i. 3, 12.

I can, for my part, think of no state so insupportable and dreadful, as to have the soul vivid and afflicted, without means to declare itself; as one should say of such as are sent to execution with their tongues first cut out (were it not that in this kind of dying, the most silent seems to me the most graceful, if accompanied with a grave and constant countenance); or of those miserable prisoners, who fall into the hands of the base hangman soldiers of this age, by whom they are tormented with all sorts of inhuman usage to compel them to some excessive and impossible ransom; kept, in the meantime, in such condition and place, where they have no means of expressing or signifying their thoughts and their misery. The poets have feigned some gods who favour the deliverance of such as suffer under a languishing death;

"Hunc ego Diti
Sacrum jussa fero, teque isto corpore solvo;"[1]

both the interrupted words, and the short and irregular answers one gets from them sometimes, by bawling and keeping a clutter about them; or the motions which seem to yield some consent to what we would have them do, are no testimony, nevertheless, that they live, an entire life at least. So it happens to us in the yawning of sleep, before it has fully possessed us, to perceive, as in a dream, what is done about us, and to follow the last things that are said with a perplexed and uncertain hearing which seems but to touch upon the borders of the soul; and make answers to the last words that have been spoken to us, which have more in them of chance than sense.

Now seeing I have in effect tried it, I have no doubt but I have hitherto made a right judgment; for first, being in a swoon, I laboured to rip open the buttons of my doublet with my nails for my sword was gone; and yet I felt nothing in my imagination that hurt me; for we have many motions in us that do not proceed from our direction;

"Semianimesque micant digiti, ferrumque retractant;"[2]

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[1] "I by command offer to Pluto this, and from that body dismiss the soul."—*Æneid*, iv. 702.

[2] "Half-dead fingers grope about, and seek to grasp again the sword."—*Idem*, x. 396.

so falling people extend their arms before them by a natural impulse, which prompts our limbs to offices and motions without any commission from our reason.

> "Falciferos memorant currus abscindere membra . . .
> Ut tremere in terra videatur ab artubus id quod
> Decidit abscissum; cum mens tamen atque hominis vis,
> Mobilitate mali, non quit sentire dolorem." [1]

My stomach was so oppressed with the coagulated blood, that my hands moved to that part, of their own voluntary motion, as they frequently do to the part that itches, without being directed by our will. There are several animals, and even men, in whom one may perceive the muscles to stir and tremble after they are dead. Every one experimentally knows, that there are some members, which grow stiff and flag without his leave. Now, those passions which only touch the outward bark of us, cannot be said to be ours: to make them so, there must be a concurrence of the whole man; and the pains which are felt by the hand or the foot while we are sleeping, are none of ours.

As I drew near my own house, where the alarm of my fall was already got before me, and that my family were come out to meet me, with the hubbub usual in such cases, not only did I make some little answer to some questions which were asked me, but they moreover tell me, that I was sufficiently collected to order them to bring a horse to my wife whom I saw struggling and tiring herself on the road, which is hilly and rugged.[2] This consideration should seem to proceed from a soul that retained its functions; but it was nothing so with me. I knew not what I said or did, and they were nothing but idle thoughts in the clouds, that were stirred up by the senses of the eyes and ears, and proceeded not from me. I knew not for all that, whence I came or whither I went, neither was I

[1] "They tell how limbs by scythe-bearing chariots are lopped off, but yet move and tremble on the ground; and yet the mind of him from whom the limb is taken, by the swiftness of the blow feels no pain."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 642.

[2] Which Cotton thus singularly renders: "I had so much sense, as to order that a horse I saw trip and falter in the way, which is mountainous and uneasy, should be given to my wife." And he is followed by Coste.

capable to weigh and consider what was said to me: these were light effects, that the senses produced of themselves as of custom; what the soul contributed was in a dream, lightly touched, licked and bedewed by the soft impression of the senses. Notwithstanding, my condition was, in truth, very easy and quiet; I had no affliction upon me, either for others or myself; it was an extreme languor and weakness, without any manner of pain. I saw my own house, but knew it not. When they had put me to bed I found an inexpressible sweetness in that repose; for I had been desperately tugged and lugged by those poor people who had taken the pains to carry me upon their arms a very great and a very rough way, and had in so doing all quite tired out themselves, twice or thrice one after another. They offered me several remedies, but I would take none, certainly believing that I was mortally wounded in the head. And, in earnest, it had been a very happy death, for the weakness of my understanding deprived me of the faculty of discerning, and that of my body of the sense of feeling; I was suffering myself to glide away so sweetly and after so soft and easy a manner, that I scarce find any other action less troublesome than that was. But when I came again to myself and to resume my faculties,

"Ut tandem sensus convaluere mei,"[1]

which was two or three hours after, I felt myself on a sudden involved in terrible pain, having my limbs battered and ground with my fall, and was so ill for two or three nights after, that I thought I was once more dying again, but a more painful death, having concluded myself as good as dead before, and to this hour am sensible of the bruises of that terrible shock. I will not here omit, that the last thing I could make them beat into my head, was the memory of this accident, and I had it over and over again repeated to me, whither I was going, from whence I came, and at what time of the day this mischance befel me, before I could comprehend it. As to the manner of my fall, that was concealed from me in favour to him who had

[1] "When at length my lost senses again returned."—OVID, *Trist.*, i. 3, 14.

been the occasion, and other flim-flams were invented. But a long time after, and the very next day that my memory began to return and to represent to me the state wherein I was, at the instant that I perceived this horse coming full drive upon me (for I had seen him at my heels, and gave myself for gone, but this thought had been so sudden, that fear had had no leisure to introduce itself) it seemed to me like a flash of lightning that had pierced my soul, and that I came from the other world.

This long story of so light an accident would appear vain enough, were it not for the knowledge I have gained by it for my own use; for I do really find, that to get acquainted with death, needs no more but nearly to approach it. Every one, as Pliny says,[1] is a good doctrine to himself, provided he be capable of discovering himself near at hand. Here, this is not my doctrine, 'tis my study; and is not the lesson of another, but my own; and if I communicate it, it ought not to be ill taken, for that which is of use to me, may also, peradventure, be useful to another. As to the rest, I spoil nothing, I make use of nothing but my own; and if I play the fool, 'tis at my own expense and nobody else is concerned in't; for 'tis a folly that will die with me, and that no one is to inherit. We hear but of two or three of the ancients,[2] who have beaten this road, and yet I cannot say if it was after this manner, knowing no more of them but their names. No one since has followed the track: 'tis a rugged road, more so than it seems, to follow a pace so rambling and uncertain, as that of the soul; to penetrate the dark profundities of its intricate internal windings; to choose and lay hold of so many little nimble motions; 'tis a new and extraordinary undertaking, and that withdraws us from the common and most recommended employments of the world. 'Tis now many years since that my thoughts have had no other aim and level than myself, and that I have only pried into and studied myself: or, if I study any other thing, 'tis to apply it to or rather in myself. And yet I do not think it a fault, if, as others do by other much less profitable

[1] Nat. Hist., xxii. 24.

[2] As Archilochus and Alcæus among the Greeks, and Lucullus among the Romans.—COSTE.

sciences, I communicate what I have learned in this; though I am not very well pleased with my own progress. There is no description so difficult, nor doubtless of so great utility, as that of a man's self: and withal, a man must curl his hair and set out and adjust himself, to appear in public; now I am perpetually tricking myself out, for I am eternally upon my own description. Custom has made all speaking of a man's self vicious, and positively interdicts it, in hatred to the boasting that seems inseparable from the testimony men give of themselves:

"In vitium ducit culpæ fuga."[1]

Instead of blowing the child's nose, this is to take his nose off altogether. I think the remedy worse than the disease. But, allowing it to be true that it must of necessity be presumption to entertain people with discourses of one's self, I ought not, pursuing my general design, to forbear an action that publishes this infirmity of mine, nor conceal the fault which I not only practise but profess. Notwithstanding, to speak my thought freely, I think that the custom of condemning wine, because some people will be drunk, is itself to be condemned; a man cannot abuse anything but what is good in itself; and I believe that this rule has only regard to the popular vice. They are bits for calves, with which neither the saints whom we hear speak so highly of themselves, nor the philosophers, nor the divines, will be curbed; neither will I, who am as little the one as the other. If they do not write of it expressly, at all events, when the occasions arise, they don't hesitate to put themselves on the public highway. Of what does Socrates treat more largely than of himself? To what does he more direct and address the discourses of his disciples, than to speak of themselves, not of the lesson in their book, but of the essence and motion of their souls? We confess ourselves religiously to God and our confessor; as our neighbours[2] do to all the people. But some will answer that we there speak nothing but accusation against ourselves; why then, we say all; for our very virtue itself

[1] "The avoiding a mere fault often leads us into a greater."—HORACE, *De Arte Poetica*, verse 31.

[2] The Protestants.

is faulty and penitable. My trade and art is to live; he that forbids me to speak according to my own sense, experience, and practice, may as well enjoin an architect not to speak of building according to his own knowledge, but according to that of his neighbour; according to the knowledge of another, and not according to his own. If it be vainglory for a man to publish his own virtues, why does not Cicero prefer the eloquence of Hortensius, and Hortensius that of Cicero? Peradventure they mean, that I should give testimony of myself by works and effects, not barely by words. I chiefly paint my thoughts, a subject void of form and incapable of operative production; 'tis all that I can do to couch it in this airy body of the voice; the wisest and devoutest men have lived in the greatest care to avoid all apparent effects. Effects would more speak of fortune than of me; they manifest their own office and not mine, but uncertainly and by conjecture; patterns of some one particular virtue. I expose myself entire; 'tis a body where, at one view, the veins, muscles, and tendons are apparent, every of them in its proper place; here the effect of a cold; there of the heart beating, very dubiously. I do not write my own acts, but myself and my essence.

I am of opinion that a man must be very cautious how he values himself, and equally conscientious to give a true report, be it better or worse, impartially. If I thought myself perfectly good and wise, I would rattle it out to some purpose. To speak less of one's self than what one really is, is folly, not modesty; and to take that for current pay, which is under a man's value, is pusillanimity and cowardice, according to Aristotle.[1] No virtue assists itself with falsehood; truth is never a matter of error. To speak more of one's self than is really true, is not always mere presumption; 'tis, moreover, very often folly; to be immeasurably pleased with what one is, and to fall into an indiscreet self-love, is in my opinion the substance of this vice. The most sovereign remedy to cure it, is to do quite contrary to what these people direct who, in forbidding men to speak of themselves, consequently, at the same time, interdict thinking of themselves too. Pride dwells in the thought; the tongue can have but a very little share in it.

[1] Moral. Nicomach., iv. 7.

They fancy that to think of one's self is to be delighted with one's self; to frequent and converse with one's self, to be over-indulgent; but this excess springs only in those who take but a superficial view of themselves, and dedicate their main inspection to their affairs; who call it mere reverie and idleness to occupy one's self with one's self, and the building one's self up a mere building of castles in the air; who look upon themselves as a third person only, a stranger. If any one be in rapture with his own knowledge, looking only on those below him, let him but turn his eye upward towards past ages, and his pride will be abated, when he shall there find so many thousand wits that trample him under foot. If he enter into a flattering presumption of his personal valour, let him but recollect the lives of Scipio, Epaminondas; so many armies, so many nations, that leave him so far behind them. No particular quality can make any one proud, that will at the same time put the many other weak and imperfect ones he has in the other scale, and the nothingness of human condition to make up the weight. Because Socrates had alone digested to purpose the precept of his god, "to know himself," and by that study arrived at the perfection of setting himself at nought, he only was reputed worthy the title of a sage. Whosoever shall so know himself, let him boldly speak it out.

CHAPTER VII.

OF RECOMPENSES OF HONOUR.

They who write the life of Augustus Cæsar,[1] observe this in his military discipline, that he was wonderfully liberal of gifts to men of merit, but that as to the true recompenses of honour he was as sparing; yet he himself had been gratified by his uncle with all the military recompenses before he had ever been in the field. It was a pretty

[1] Suetonius, Life of Augustus, c. 25.

invention, and received into most governments of the world, to institute certain vain and in themselves valueless distinctions to honour and recompense virtue, such as the crowns of laurel, oak, and myrtle, the particular fashion of some garment, the privilege to ride in a coach in the city, or at night with a torch, some peculiar place assigned in public assemblies, the prerogative of certain additional names and titles, certain distinctions in the bearing of coats of arms, and the like, the use of which, according to the several humours of nations, has been variously received, and yet continues.

We in France, as also several of our neighbours, have orders of knighthood that are instituted only for this end. And 'tis, in earnest, a very good and profitable custom to find out an acknowledgment for the worth of rare and excellent men, and to satisfy them with rewards that are not at all chargeable either to prince or people. And that which has been always found by ancient experience, and which we have heretofore observed among ourselves, that men of quality have ever been more jealous of such recompenses than of those wherein there was gain and profit, is not without very good ground and reason. If with the reward, which ought to be simply a recompense of honour, they should mix other commodities and add riches, this mixture, instead of procuring an increase of estimation, would debase and abate it. The Order of St. Michael, which has been so long in repute amongst us, had no greater commodity than that it had no communication with any other commodity, which produced this effect, that formerly there was no office or title whatever to which the gentry pretended with so great desire and affection as they did to that; no quality that carried with it more respect and grandeur, valour and worth more willingly embracing and with greater ambition aspiring to a recompense purely its own, and rather glorious than profitable. For, in truth, other gifts have not so great a dignity of usage, by reason they are laid out upon all sorts of occasions; with money a man pays the wages of a servant, the diligence of a courier, dancing, vaulting, speaking, and the meanest offices we receive; nay, and reward vice with it too, as flattery, treachery, and pimping; and therefore 'tis no wonder if

virtue less desires and less willingly receives this common sort of payment, than that which is proper and peculiar to her, throughout generous and noble. Augustus had reason to be more sparing of this than the other, by how much honour is a privilege that extracts its principal esteem from rarity; and so virtue itself.

"Cui malus est nemo, quis bonus esse potest?"[1]

We do not intend it for a commendation when we say that such a one is careful in the education of his children, by reason it is a common act, how just and well done soever; no more than we commend a great tree, where the whole forest is the same. I do not think that any citizen of Sparta glorified himself much upon his valour, it being the universal virtue of the whole nation; and as little upon his fidelity and contempt of riches. There is no recompense becomes virtue, how great soever, that is once passed into a custom; and I know not withal whether we can ever call it great, being common.

Seeing, then, that these remunerations of honour have no other value and estimation but only this, that few people enjoy them, 'tis but to be liberal of them to bring them down to nothing. And though there should be now more men found than in former times worthy of our order,[2] the estimation of it nevertheless should not be abated, nor the honour made cheap; and it may easily happen that more may merit it; for there is no virtue that so easily spreads as that of military valour. There is another virtue, true, perfect, and philosophical, of which I do not speak, and only make use of the word in our common acceptation, much greater than this and more full, which is a force and assurance of the soul, equally despising all sorts of adverse accidents, equable, uniform, and constant, of which ours is no more than one little ray. Use, education, example, and custom can do all in all to the establishment of that whereof I am speaking, and with great facility render it common, as by the experience of our civil wars is manifest enough;

[1] "To whom none seems ill, who can seem good?"—MARTIAL, xii. 82.

[2] Montaigne was of the Order of St. Michael.

and whoever could at this time unite us all, Catholic and Huguenot, into one body, and set us upon some brave common enterprise, we should again make our ancient military reputation flourish. It is most certain that in times past the recompense of this order had not only a regard to valour, but had a further prospect; it never was the reward of a valiant soldier but of a great captain; the science of obeying was not reputed worthy of so honourable a guerdon. There was therein a more universal military expertness required, and that comprehended the most and the greatest qualities of a military man, "Neque enim eædem, militares et imperatoriæ, artes sunt,"[1] as also, besides, a condition suitable to such a dignity. But, I say, though more men were worthy than formerly, yet ought it not to be more liberally distributed, and it were better to fall short in not giving it at all to whom it should be due, than for ever to lose, as we have lately done, the fruit of so profitable an invention. No man of spirit will deign to advantage himself with what is in common with many; and such of the present time as have least merited this recompense themselves, make the greater show of disdaining it, in order thereby to be ranked with those to whom so much wrong has been done by the unworthy conferring and debasing the distinction which was their particular right.

Now, to expect that in obliterating and abolishing this, suddenly to create and bring into credit a like institution, is not a proper attempt for so licentious and so sick a time as this wherein we now are; and it will fall out that the last will from its birth incur the same inconveniences that have ruined the other.[2] The rules for dispensing this new order had need to be extremely clipt and bound under great restrictions, to give it authority; and this tumultuous season is incapable of such a curb: besides that, before this can be brought into repute, 'tis necessary that the memory of the first, and of the contempt into which it is fallen, be buried in oblivion.

This place might naturally enough admit of some

[1] "For the military knowledge required in a common soldier and a general are not the same."—LIVY, xxv. 19.

[2] Montaigne refers to the Order of the Saint-Esprit, instituted by Henry III. in 1578.

discourse upon the consideration of valour, and the difference of this virtue from others; but Plutarch having so often handled this subject, I should give myself an unnecessary trouble to repeat what he has said. But this is worth considering that our nation places valour, *vaillance*, in the highest degree of virtue, as its very word evidences, being derived from *valeur*, and that, according to our use, when we say a man of high worth, a good man, in our court style 'tis to say a valiant man, after the Roman way, for the general appellation of virtue with them, takes etymology from *vis*, force. The proper, sole, and essential profession of the French noblesse is that of arms: and 'tis likely that the first virtue which discovered itself amongst men and has given to some advantage over others, was that by which the strongest and most valiant have mastered the weaker, and acquired a particular authority and reputation, whence came to it that dignified appellation; or else, that these nations, being very warlike, gave the pre-eminence to that of the virtues which was most familiar to them; just as our passion and the feverish solicitude we have of the chastity of women occasions that to say, a good woman, a woman of worth, a woman of honour and virtue, signifies merely a chaste woman: as if, to oblige them to that one duty, we were indifferent as to all the rest, and gave them the reins in all other faults whatever to compound for that one of incontinence.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE AFFECTION OF FATHERS TO THEIR CHILDREN.

TO MADAME D'ESTISSAC.

MADAM, if the strangeness and novelty of my subject, which are wont to give value to things, do not save me, I shall never come off with honour from this foolish attempt: but 'tis so fantastic, and carries a face so unlike the common use, that this, peradventure, may make it pass.

'Tis a melancholic humour, and consequently a humour very much an enemy to my natural complexion, engendered by the pensiveness of the solitude into which for some years past I have retired myself, that first put into my head this idle fancy of writing. Wherein, finding myself totally unprovided and empty of other matter, I presented myself to myself for argument and subject. 'Tis the only book in the world of its kind, and of a wild and extravagant design. There is nothing worth remark in this affair but that extravagancy: for in a subject so vain and frivolous, the best workman in the world could not have given it a form fit to recommend it to any manner of esteem.

Now, madam, having to draw my own picture to the life, I had omitted one important feature, had I not therein represented the honour I have ever had for you and your merits; which I have purposely chosen to say in the beginning of this chapter, by reason that amongst the many other excellent qualities you are mistress of, that of the tender love you have manifested to your children, is seated in one of the highest places. Whoever knows at what age Monsieur D'Estissac, your husband, left you a widow, the great and honourable matches that have since been offered to you, as many as to any lady of your condition in France, the constancy and steadiness wherewith, for so many years, you have sustained so many sharp difficulties, the burden and conduct of affairs which have persecuted you in every corner of the kingdom, and are not yet weary of tormenting you, and the happy direction you have given to all these, by your sole prudence or good fortune, will easily conclude with me that we have not so vivid an example as yours of maternal affection in our times. I praise God, madam, that it has been so well employed; for the great hopes Monsieur D'Estissac, your son, gives of himself, render sufficient assurance that when he comes of age you will reap from him all the obedience and gratitude of a very good man. But, forasmuch as by reason of his tender years, he has not been capable of taking notice of those offices of extremest value he has in so great number received from you, I will, if these papers shall one day happen to fall into his hands, when I shall neither have mouth nor speech left to deliver it to him.

that he shall receive from me a true account of those things, which shall be more effectually manifested to him by their own effects, by which he will understand that there is not a gentleman in France who stands more indebted to a mother's care; and that he cannot, in the future, give a better nor more certain testimony of his own worth and virtue than by acknowledging you for that excellent mother you are.

If there be any law truly natural, that is to say, any instinct that is seen universally and perpetually imprinted in both beasts and men (which is not without controversy). I can say, that in my opinion, next to the care every animal has of its own preservation, and to avoid that which may hurt him, the affection that the begetter bears to his offspring holds the second place in this rank. And seeing that nature appears to have recommended it to us, having regard to the extension and progression of the successive pieces of this machine of hers, 'tis no wonder if, on the contrary, that of children towards their parents is not so great. To which we may add this other Aristotelian consideration,[1] that he who confers a benefit on any one, loves him better than he is beloved by him again: that he to whom is owing, loves better than he who owes; and that every artificer is fonder of his work, than, if that work had sense, it would be of him; by reason that it is dear to us *to be*, and *to be* consists in movement and action; therefore every one has in some sort a being in his work. He who confers a benefit exercises a fine and honest action; he who receives it exercises the useful only. Now the useful is much less loveable than the honest; the honest is stable and permanent, supplying him who has done it with a continual gratification. The useful loses itself, easily slides away, and the memory of it is neither so fresh nor so pleasing. Those things are dearest to us that have cost us most, and giving is more chargeable than receiving.

Since it has pleased God to endue us with some capacity of reason, to the end we may not, like brutes, be servilely subject and enslaved to the laws common to both, but that we should by judgment and a voluntary liberty

[1] Moral. Nicom., ix. 7.

apply ourselves to them, we ought, indeed, something to yield to the simple authority of nature, but not suffer ourselves to be tyrannically hurried away and transported by her; reason alone should have the conduct of our inclinations. I, for my part, have a strange disgust for those propensions that are started in us without the mediation and direction of the judgment, as, upon the subject I am speaking of, I cannot entertain that passion of dandling and caressing infants scarcely born, having as yet neither motion of soul nor shape of body distinguishable, by which they can render themselves amiable, and have not willingly suffered them to be nursed near me. A true and regular affection ought to spring and increase with the knowledge they give us of themselves, and then, if they are worthy of it, the natural propension walking hand in hand with reason, to cherish them with a truly paternal love; and so to judge, also, if they be otherwise, still rendering ourselves to reason, notwithstanding the inclination of nature. 'Tis ofttimes quite otherwise; and, most commonly, we find ourselves more taken with the running up and down, the games, and puerile simplicities of our children, than we do, afterwards, with their most complete actions; as if we had loved them for our sport, like monkeys, and not as men; and some there are, who are very liberal in buying them balls to play withal, who are very close-handed for the least necessary expense when they come to age. Nay, it looks as if the jealousy of seeing them appear in and enjoy the world when we are about to leave it, rendered us more niggardly and stingy towards them; it vexes us that they tread upon our heels, as if to solicit us to go out; if this were to be feared, since the order of things will have it so that they cannot, to speak the truth, be nor live, but at the expense of our being and life, we should never meddle with being fathers at all.

For my part, I think it cruelty and injustice not to receive them into the share and society of our goods, and not to make them partakers in the intelligence of our domestic affairs when they are capable, and not to lessen and contract our own expenses to make the more room for theirs, seeing we beget them to that effect. 'Tis unjust

that an old fellow, broken and half dead, should alone, in a corner of the chimney, enjoy the money that would suffice for the maintenance and advancement of many children, and suffer them, in the meantime, to lose their best years for want of means to advance themselves in the public service and the knowledge of men. A man by this course drives them to despair, and to seek out by any means, how unjust or dishonourable soever, to provide for their own support; as I have, in my time, seen several young men of good extraction so addicted to stealing that no correction could cure them of it. I know one of a very good family, to whom, at the request of a brother of his, a very honest and brave gentleman, I once spoke on this account, who made answer, and confessed to me roundly, that he had been put upon this dirty practice by the severity and avarice of his father; but that he was now so accustomed to it he could not leave it off. And, at that very time, he was trapped stealing a lady's rings, having come into her chamber as she was dressing with several others. He put me in mind of a story I had heard of another gentleman, so perfect and accomplished in this fine trade in his youth, that, after he came to his estate and resolved to give it over, he could not hold his hands, nevertheless, if he passed by a shop where he saw anything he liked, from catching it up, though it put him to the shame of sending afterwards to pay for it. And I have myself seen several so habituated to this quality that even amongst their comrades they could not forbear filching, though with intent to restore what they had taken. I am a Gascon, and yet there is no vice I so little understand as that; I hate it something more by disposition than I condemn it by reason; I do not so much as desire any thing of another man's. This province of ours is, in plain truth, a little more decried than the other parts of the kingdom; and yet we have several times seen, in our times, men of good families of other provinces, in the hands of justice, convicted of abominable thefts. I fear this vice is, in some sort, to be attributed to the forementioned vice of the fathers.

And if a man should tell me, as a lord of very good understanding once did, that "he hoarded up wealth, not

to extract any other fruit and use from his parsimony, but to make himself honoured and sought after by his relations; and that age having deprived him of all other power, it was the only remaining remedy to maintain his authority in his family, and to keep him from being neglected and despised by all around," in truth, not only old age, but all other imbecility, according to Aristotle,[1] is the promoter of avarice; that is something, but it is physic for a disease that a man should prevent the birth of. A father is very miserable who has no other hold on his children's affection than the need they have of his assistance, if that can be called affection; he must render himself worthy to be respected by his virtue and wisdom, and beloved by his kindness and the sweetness of his manners; even the very ashes of a rich matter have their value; and we are wont to have the bones and relics of worthy men in regard and reverence. No old age can be so decrepid in a man who has passed his life in honour, but it must be venerable, especially to his children, whose soul he must have trained up to their duty by reason, not by necessity and the need they have of him, nor by harshness and compulsion.

> "Et errat longe, mea quidem sententia,
> Qui imperium credat esse gravius, aut stabilius,
> Vi quod fit, quam illud, quod amicitia adjungitur."[2]

I condemn all violence in the education of a tender soul that is designed for honour and liberty. There is I know not what of servile in rigour and constraint; and I am of opinion that what is not to be done by reason, prudence, and address, is never to be affected by force. I myself was brought up after that manner; and they tell me that in all my first age I never felt the rod but twice, and then very slightly. I practised the same method with my children, who all of them died at nurse, except Leonora, my only daughter, and who arrived to the age of five years and upward without other correction for her childish faults (her mother's indulgence easily concurring) than words only, and

[1] Moral. Nicom., iv. 3.

[2] "He greatly errs, in my opinion, who thinks that empire more absolute and durable which is acquired by force than that which gentleness and friendship create."—TERENCE, *Adelph.*, i. 1, 40.

those very gentle; in which kind of proceeding, though my end and expectation should be both frustrated, there are other causes enough to lay the fault on without blaming my discipline, which I know to be natural and just, and I should, in this, have yet been more religious towards the males, as less born to subjection and more free; and I should have made it my business to fill their hearts with ingenuousness and freedom. I have never observed other effects of whipping than to render boys more cowardly, or more wilfully obstinate.

Do we desire to be beloved of our children? Will we remove from them all occasion of wishing our death (though no occasion of so horrid a wish can either be just or excusable, "Nullum scelus rationem habet"[1]), let us reasonably accommodate their lives with what is in our power. In order to this, we should not marry so young that our age shall in a manner be confounded with theirs; for this inconvenience plunges us into many very great difficulties, and especially the gentry of the nation, who are of a condition wherein they have little to do, and who live upon their rents only: for elsewhere, with people who live by their labour, the plurality and company of children is an increase to the common stock; they are so many new tools and instruments wherewith to grow rich.

I married at three-and-thirty years of age, and concur in the opinion of thirty-five, which is said to be that of Aristotle.[2] Plato will have nobody marry before thirty; but he has reason to laugh at those who undertook the work of marriage after five-and-fifty, and condemns their offspring as unworthy of aliment and life. Thales gave the truest limits, who, young and being importuned by his mother to marry, answered, "That it was too soon," and, being grown into years and urged again, "That it was too late."[3] A man must deny opportunity to every inopportune action. The ancient Gauls[4] looked upon it as a very horrid thing for a

[1] "No wickedness is founded on reason."—LIVY, xxviii. 28.

[2] Aristotle, Politics, vii. 16, says thirty-seven, not thirty-five.—COSTE.

[3] Diogenes Laertius, Life of Thales, i. 26.

[4] Cæsar, De Bello Gallico, vi. 21, who, however, says this not of the Gauls, but of the Germans.

man to have society with a woman before he was twenty years of age, and strictly recommended to the men who designed themselves for war the keeping their virginity till well grown in years, forasmuch as courage is abated and diverted by the use of women.

> "Mà or congiunto à giovinetta sposa,
> E lieto omai de' figli, era invilito
> Negli affetti di padre et di marito."[1]

Muleasses, king of Tunis,[2] he whom the Emperor Charles V. restored to his kingdom, reproached the memory of his father Mahomet with the frequentation of women, styling him loose, effeminate, and a getter of children.[3] The Greek history observes of Iccus the Tarentine, of Chryso, Astyllus, Diopompus, and others, that to keep their bodies in order for the Olympic games and such like exercises, they denied themselves during that preparation all commerce with Venus.[4] In a certain country of the Spanish Indies men were not permitted to marry till after forty years of age, and yet the girls were allowed to marry at ten. 'Tis not time for a gentleman of five-and-thirty years old to give place to his son who is twenty; he, being himself in a condition to serve both in the expeditions of war and in the court of his prince, has need of all his equipage; and yet, doubtless, ought to allow his son a share, but not so great a one as wholly to disfurnish himself; and for such a one the saying that fathers have ordinarily in their mouths, that they will not put off their clothes before they go to bed, is proper enough.

But a father worn out with age and infirmities, and deprived by his weakness and want of health of the common society of men, wrongs himself and his to rake together a great mass of treasure. He has lived long enough, if he be wise, to have a mind to strip himself to go to bed, not to his very shirt, I confess, but to that, and a good warm dressing-gown; the remaining pomps, of which he has no

[1] "Now, married to a young wife and happy in children, his old courage is abated by his love as father and husband."—TASSO, *Gierus*, x. 39.

[2] Muley-Hassam.

[3] Of whom he had thirty-four.

[4] Plato, De Leg., viii.

further use, he ought voluntarily to surrender to those to whom by the order of nature they belong. 'Tis reason he should refer the use of those things to them, seeing that nature has reduced him to such a state that he cannot enjoy them himself; otherwise there is doubtless malice and envy in the case. The greatest act of the Emperor Charles V. was that when, in imitation of some of the ancients of his own quality, confessing it but reason to strip ourselves when our clothes encumber and grow too heavy for us, and to lie down when our legs begin to fail us, he resigned his possessions, grandeur, and power to his son, when he found himself failing in vigour and steadiness for the conduct of his affairs suitable with the glory he had therein acquired.

> "Solve senescentem mature sanus equum, ne
> Peccet ad extremum ridendus, et ilia ducat."[1]

This fault of not perceiving betimes and of not being sensible of the feebleness and extreme alteration that age naturally brings both upon body and mind, which, in my opinion, is equal, if indeed the soul has not more than half, has lost the reputation of most of the great men in the world. I have known in my time, and been intimately acquainted with persons of great authority, whom one might easily discern marvellously lapsed from the sufficiency I knew they were once endued with, by the reputation they had acquired in their former years, whom I could heartily, for their own sakes, have wished at home at their ease, discharged of their public or military employments, which were now grown too heavy for their shoulders. I have formerly been very familiar in a gentleman's house, a widower and very old, though healthy and cheerful enough: this gentleman had several daughters to marry and a son already of ripe age, which brought upon him many visitors, and a great expense, neither of which well pleased him, not only out of consideration of frugality, but yet more for having, by reason of his age, entered into a course of life far differing from ours. I told him one day, a little boldly as I used to do, that he would do better to give us younger

[1] "Dismiss the old horse in good time, lest, failing in the lists, the spectators laugh."—HORACE, *Epist.* i. 1, 8.

folk room, and to leave his principal house (for he had but that well placed and furnished), to his son, and himself retire to an estate he had hard by, where nobody would trouble his repose, seeing he could not otherwise avoid being importuned by us, the condition of his children considered. He took my advice afterwards, and found an advantage in so doing.

I do not mean that a man should so instal them as not to reserve to himself a liberty to retract; I, who am now arrived to the age wherein such things are fit to be done, would resign to them the enjoyment of my house and goods, but with a power of revocation if they should give me cause to alter my mind; I would leave to them the use, that being no longer convenient for me; and, of the general authority and power over all, would reserve as much as I thought good to myself; having always held that it must needs be a great satisfaction to an aged father himself to put his children into the way of governing his affairs, and to have power during his own life to control their behaviour, supplying them with instruction and advice from his own experience, and himself to transfer the ancient honour and order of his house into the hands of those who are to succeed him, and by that means to satisfy himself as to the hopes he may conceive of their future conduct. And in order to this I would not avoid their company; I would observe them near at hand, and partake, according to the condition of my age, of their feasts and jollities. If I did not live absolutely amongst them, which I could not do without annoying them and their friends, by reason of the morosity of my age and the restlessness of my infirmities, and without violating also the rules and order of living I should then have set down to myself, I would, at least, live near them in some retired part of my house, not the best in show, but the most commodious. Nor as I saw, some years ago, a dean of St. Hilary of Poitiers, by his melancholy given up to such a solitude, that at the time I came into his chamber it had been two and twenty years that he had not stepped one foot out of it, and yet had all his motions free and easy, and was in good health, saving a cold that fell upon his lungs; he would, hardly once in a week, suffer any one to come in to see him; he always kept

himself shut up in his chamber alone, except that a servant brought him, once a day, something to eat, and did then but just come in and go out again. His employment was to walk up and down, and read some book, for he was a bit of a scholar; but, as to the rest, obstinately bent to die in this retirement, as he soon after did. I would endeavour by pleasant conversation to create in my children a warm and unfeigned friendship and good will towards me, which in well-descended natures is not hard to do; for if they be furious brutes, of which this age of ours produces thousands, we are then to hate and avoid them as such.

I am angry at the custom of forbidding children to call their father by the name of father, and to enjoin them another, as more full of respect and reverence, as if nature had not sufficiently provided for our authority. We call Almighty God Father, and disdain to have our children call us so; I have reformed this error in my family.[1] And 'tis also folly and injustice to deprive children, when grown up, of familiarity with their father, and to carry a scornful and austere countenance toward them, thinking by that to keep them in awe and obedience; for it is a very idle farce that, instead of producing the effect designed, renders fathers distasteful, and, which is worse, ridiculous to their own children. They have youth and vigour in possession, and consequently the breath and favour of the world; and therefore receive these fierce and tyrannical looks—mere scarecrows—of a man without blood, either in his heart or veins, with mockery and contempt. Though I could make myself feared, I had yet much rather make myself beloved: there are so many sorts of defects in old age, so much imbecility, and it is so liable to contempt, that the best acquisition a man can make is the kindness and affection of his own family; command and fear are no longer his weapons. Such an one I have known who, having been very imperious in his youth, when he came to be old, though he might have lived at his full ease, would ever strike, rant, swear, and curse: the most tempestuous master in France: fretting himself with unnecessary suspicion and vigilance. And all this rumble and clutter but to make

[1] As did Henry IV. of France; see his Life by Péréfixe.—COSTE.

his family cheat him the more; of his barn, his kitchen, cellar, nay, and his very purse too, others had the greatest use and share, whilst he keeps his keys in his pocket much more carefully than his eyes. Whilst he hugs himself with the frugality of the pitiful pittance of a wretched and niggardly table, everything goes to rack and ruin in every corner of his house, in play, drink, all sorts of profusion, making sport in their junkets with his vain anger and fruitless parsimony. Every one is a sentinel against him, and if, by accident, any wretched fellow that serves him is of another humour, and will not join with the rest, he is presently rendered suspected to him, a bait that old age very easily bites at of itself. How often has this gentleman boasted to me in how great awe he kept his family, and how exact an obedience and reverence they paid him! How clearly he saw into his own affairs!

"Ille solus nescit omnia."[1]

I do not know any one that can muster more parts, both natural and acquired, proper to maintain dominion, than he; yet he is fallen from it like a child. For this reason it is that I have picked out him, amongst several others that I know of the same humour, for the greatest example. It were matter for a question in the schools, whether he is better thus or otherwise. In his presence, all submit to and bow to him, and give so much way to his vanity that nobody ever resists him; he has his fill of assents, of seeming fear, submission, and respect. Does he turn away a servant? he packs up his bundle, and is gone; but 'tis no further than just out of his sight: the steps of old age are so slow, the senses so troubled, that he will live and do his old office in the same house a year together without being perceived. And after a fit interval of time, letters are pretended to come from a great way off, very humble, suppliant, and full of promises of amendment, by virtue of which he is again received into favour. Does Monsieur make any bargain, or prepare any despatch that does not please? 'tis suppressed, and causes afterwards forged to

[1] "He alone is ignorant of all that is passing."— TERENCE, *Adelph.*, iv. 2, 9.

excuse the want of execution in the one or answer in the other. No letters being first brought to him, he never sees any but those that shall seem fit for his knowledge. If by accident they fall first into his own hand, being used to trust somebody to read them to him, he reads extempore what he thinks fit, and often makes such a one ask him pardon who abuses and rails at him in his letter. In short, he sees nothing, but by an image prepared and designed beforehand, and the most satisfactory they can invent, not to rouse and awaken his ill-humour and choler. I have seen, under various aspects, enough of these modes of domestic government, long-enduring, constant, to the like effect.

Women[1] are evermore addicted to cross their husbands: they lay hold with both hands on all occasions to contradict and oppose them; the first excuse serves for a plenary justification. I have seen one who robbed her husband wholesale, that, as she told her confessor, she might distribute the more liberal alms. Let who will trust to that religious dispensation. No management of affairs seems to them of sufficient dignity, if proceeding from the husband's assent; they must usurp it either by insolence or cunning, and always injuriously, or else it has not the grace and authority they desire. When, as in the case I am speaking of, 'tis against a poor old man and for the children, then they make use of this title to serve their passion with glory; and, as for a common service easily cabal and combine against his government and dominion. If they be males grown up in full and flourishing health, they presently corrupt, either by force or favour, steward, receivers, and all the rout. Such as have neither wife nor son do not so easily fall into this misfortune; but withal more cruelly and unworthily. Cato the elder in his time said: So many servants so many enemies; consider, then, whether according to the vast difference between the purity of the age he lived in and the corruption of this of ours, he does not seem to show us, that wife, son, and servant, are so many enemies to us? 'Tis well for old age

[1] Cotton here politely interpolates "especially the perverse and elder sorts."

that it is always accompanied with want of perception, ignorance, and a facility of being deceived. For should we see how we are used and would not acquiesce, what would become of us? especially in such an age as this, where the very judges who are to determine our controversies are usually partisans to the young, and interested in the cause. In case the discovery of this cheating escape me, I cannot at least fail to discern that I am very fit to be cheated. And can a man ever enough exalt the value of a friend, in comparison with these civil ties? The very image of it which I see in beasts, so pure and uncorrupted, how religiously do I respect it! If others deceive me, yet do I not, at least, deceive myself in thinking I am able to defend myself from them, or in cudgelling my brains to make myself so. I protect myself from such treasons in my own bosom, not by an unquiet and tumultuous curiosity, but rather by diversion and resolution. When I hear talk of any one's condition, I never trouble myself to think of him; I presently turn my eyes upon myself to see in what condition I am; whatever concerns another relates to me; the accident that has befallen him gives me caution, and rouses me to turn my defence that way. We every day and every hour say things of another that we might more properly say of ourselves, could we but apply our observation to our own concerns, as well as extend it to others. And several authors have in this manner prejudiced their own cause by running headlong upon those they attack, and darting those shafts against their enemies, that are more properly, and with greater advantage, to be turned upon themselves.

The late Mareschal de Montluc having lost his son, who died in the island of Madeira, in truth a very worthy gentleman and of great expectation, did to me, amongst his other regrets, very much insist upon what a sorrow and heartbreaking it was that he had never made himself familiar with him; and by that humour of paternal gravity and grimace to have lost the opportunity of having an insight into and of well knowing his son, as also of letting him know the extreme affection he had for him, and the worthy opinion he had of his virtue. "That poor boy," said he, "never saw in me other than a stern and disdain-

ful countenance, and is gone in a belief that I neither knew how to love him nor esteem him according to his desert. For whom did I reserve the discovery of that singular affection I had for him in my soul? Was it not he himself, who ought to have had all the pleasure of it, and all the obligation? I constrained and racked myself to put on and maintain this vain disguise, and have by that means deprived myself of the pleasure of his conversation, and, I doubt, in some measure, his affection, which could not but be very cold to me, having never other from me than austerity, nor felt other than a tyrannical manner of proceeding."[1] I find this complaint to be rational and rightly apprehended: for, as I myself know by too certain experience, there is no so sweet consolation in the loss of friends as the conscience of having had no reserve or secret for them, and to have had with them a perfect and entire communication. Oh my friend,[2] am I the better for being sensible of this; or am I the worse? I am, doubtless, much the better. I am consoled and honoured, in the sorrow for his death. Is it not a pious and a pleasing office of my life to be always upon my friend's obsequies? Can there be any joy equal to this privation?

I open myself to my family, as much as I can, and very willingly let them know the state of my opinion and good will towards them, as I do to everybody else: I make haste to bring out and present myself to them; for I will not have them mistaken in me, in anything. Amongst other particular customs of our ancient Gauls, this, as Cæsar reports,[3] was one, that the sons never presented themselves before their fathers, nor durst ever appear in their company in public, till they began to bear arms; as if they would intimate by this, that it was also time for their fathers to receive them into their familiarity and acquaintance.

I have observed yet another sort of indiscretion in fathers of my time, that, not contented with having deprived their children, during their own long lives, of the

[1] Madame de Sévigné tells us that she never read this passage without tears in her eyes. "My God!" she exclaims, "how full is this book of good sense!"

[2] La Boetie.

[3] De Bello Gall., vi. 18.

share they naturally ought to have had in their fortunes, they afterwards leave to their wives the same authority over their estates, and liberty to dispose of them according to their own fancy. And I have known a certain lord, one of the principal officers of the crown, who, having in his prospect, by right of succession, about fifty thousand crowns yearly revenue, died necessitous and overwhelmed with debt, at above fifty years of age; his mother in her extremest decrepitude, being yet in possession of all his property, by the will of his father, who had, for his part, lived till near fourscore years old. This appears to me by no means reasonable. And therefore I think it of very little advantage to a man, whose affairs are well enough, to seek a wife who encumbers his estate with a very great fortune; there is no sort of foreign debt that brings more ruin to families than this: my predecessors have ever been aware of that danger and provided against it, and so have I. But those who dissuade us from rich wives, for fear they should be less tractable and kind, are out in their advice to make a man lose a real commodity for so frivolous a conjecture. It costs an unreasonable woman no more to pass over one reason than another; they cherish themselves most where they are most wrong. Injustice allures them, as the honour of their virtuous actions does the good; and the more riches they bring with them, they are so much the more good-natured, as women, who are handsome, are all the more inclined and proud to be chaste.

'Tis reasonable to leave the administration of affairs to the mothers till the children are old enough, according to law, to manage them; but the father has brought them up very ill, if he cannot hope that, when they come to maturity, they will have more wisdom and ability in the management of affairs than his wife, considering the ordinary weakness of the sex. It were, notwithstanding, to say the truth, more against nature to make the mothers depend upon the discretion of their children; they ought to be plentifully provided for, to maintain themselves according to their quality and age, by reason that necessity and indigence are much more unbecoming and insupportable to them than to men; the son should rather be cut short than the mother.

In general, the most judicious distribution of our goods, when we come to die, is, in my opinion, to let them be distributed according to the custom of the country; the laws have considered the matter better than we know how to do, and 'tis wiser to let them fail in their appointment, than rashly to run the hazard of miscarrying in ours. Nor are the goods properly ours, since by civil prescription and without us, they are all destined to certain successors. And although we have some liberty beyond that, yet I think we ought not, without great and manifest cause, to take away that from one which his fortune has allotted him, and to which the public equity gives him title; and that it is against reason to abuse this liberty, in making it serve our own frivolous and private fancies. My destiny has been kind to me in not presenting me with occasions to tempt me and divert my affection from the common and legitimate institution. I see many with whom 'tis time lost to employ a long exercise of good offices: a word ill taken obliterates ten years' merit; he is happy who is in a position to oil their goodwill at this last passage. The last action carries it: not the best and most frequent offices, but the most recent and present do the work. These are people that play with their wills as with apples or rods, to gratify or chastise every action of those who pretend to an interest in their care. 'Tis a thing of too great weight and consequence, to be so tumbled and tossed and altered every moment, and wherein the wise determine once for all, having above all things regard to reason and the public observance. We lay these masculine substitutions too much to heart, proposing a ridiculous eternity to our names. We are, moreover, too superstitious in vain conjectures as to the future, that we derive from the words and actions of children. Peradventure they might have done me an injustice, in dispossessing me of my right, for, having been the most dull and heavy, the most slow and unwilling at my book, not of all my brothers only, but of all the boys in the whole province: whether about learning my lesson, or about any bodily exercise. 'Tis a folly to make an election out of the ordinary course upon the credit of these divinations wherein we are so often deceived. If the ordinary rule of descent were to be violated, and the

destinies corrected in the choice they have made of our heirs, one might more plausibly do it upon the account of some remarkable and enormous personal deformity, a permanent and incorrigible defect, and in the opinion of us French, who are great admirers of beauty, an important prejudice.

The pleasant dialogue betwixt Plato's legislator and his citizens will be an ornament to this place.[1] "What," said they, feeling themselves about to die, "may we not dispose of our own to whom we please? Gods, what cruelty that it shall not be lawful for us, according as we have been served and attended in our sickness, in our old age, in our affairs, to give more or less to those whom we have found most diligent about us, at our own fancy and discretion!" To which the legislator answers thus: "My friends, who are now without question, very soon to die, it is hard for you in the condition you are, either to know yourselves, or what is yours, according to the delphic inscription. I, who make the laws, am of opinion, that you neither are yourselves your own, nor is that yours of which you are possessed. Both your goods and you belong to your families, as well those past as those to come; but, further, both your family and goods much more appertain to the public. Wherefore, lest any flatterer in your old age or in your sickness, or any passion of your own, should unseasonably prevail with you to make an unjust will, I shall take care to prevent that inconvenience; but, having respect both to the universal interest of the city and that of your particular family, I shall establish laws, and make it by good reasons appear, that private convenience ought to give place to the common benefit. Go then cheerfully where human necessity calls you. It is for me, who regard no more the one thing than the other, and who, as much as in me lies, am provident of the public interest, to have a care as to what you leave behind you."

To return to my subject: it appears to me that women are very rarely born to whom the prerogative over men, the maternal and natural excepted, is in any sort due, unless it be for the punishment of such, as in some amorous fever,

[1] Laws, lib. xi.

have voluntarily submitted themselves to them: but that in no way concerns the old ones, of whom we are now speaking. This consideration it is which has made us so willingly to enact and give force to that law, which was never yet seen by any one, by which women are excluded the succession to our crown: and there is hardly a government in the world where it is not pleaded, as it is here, by the probability of reason that authorizes it, though fortune has given it more credit in some places than in others. 'Tis dangerous to leave the disposal of our succession to their judgment, according to the choice they shall make of children, which is often fantastic and unjust; for the irregular appetites and depraved tastes, they have during the time of their being with child, they have at all other times in the mind. We commonly see them fond of the most weak, ricketty, and deformed children; or of those, if they have such, as are still hanging at the breast. For not having sufficient force of reason to choose and embrace that which is most worthy, they the more willingly suffer themselves to be carried away, where the impressions of nature are most alone; like animals that know their young no longer than they give them suck. As to the rest, it is easy by experience to be discerned that this natural affection to which we give so great authority has but very weak roots. For a very little profit, we every day tear their own children out of the mother's arms, and make them take ours in their room: we make them abandon their own to some pitiful nurse, to whom we disdain to commit ours, or to some she-goat, forbidding them, not only to give them suck, what danger soever they run thereby, but, moreover, to take any manner of care of them, that they may wholly be occupied with the care of and attendance upon ours; and we see in most of them an adulterate affection, more vehement than the natural, begotten by custom toward the foster children, and a greater solicitude for the preservation of those they have taken charge of, than of their own. And that which I was saying of goats was upon this account; that it is ordinary all about where I live, to see the countrywomen, when they want milk of their own for their children, to call goats to their assistance; and I have at this hour two men-servants that never sucked woman's milk more than eight

days after they were born. These goats are immediately taught to come to suckle the little children, know their voices when they cry, and come running to them. If any other than this foster-child be presented to them, they refuse to let it suck; and the child in like manner will refuse to suck another goat. I saw one the other day from whom they had taken away the goat that used to nourish it, by reason the father had only borrowed it of a neighbour; the child would not touch any other they could bring, and died, doubtless of hunger. Beasts as easily alter and corrupt their natural affection as we: I believe that in what Herodotus relates of a certain district of Lybia, there are many mistakes; he says that the women are there in common; but that the child so soon as it can go, finds him out in the crowd for his father, to whom he is first led by his natural inclination.

Now, to consider this simple reason for loving our children, that we have begot them, therefore calling them our second selves, it appears, methinks, that there is another kind of production proceeding from us, that is of no less recommendation: for that which we engender by the soul, the issue of our understanding, courage, and abilities, springs from nobler parts than those of the body, and that are much more our own: we are both father and mother in this generation. These cost us a great deal more and bring us more honour, if they have anything of good in them. For the value of our other children is much more theirs than ours; the share we have in them is very little; but of these, all the beauty, all the grace and value, are ours; and also they more vividly represent us than the others. Plato adds, that these are immortal children that immortalize and deify their fathers, as Lycurgus, Solon, Minos. Now, histories being full of examples of the common affection of fathers to their children, it seems not altogether improper to introduce some few of this other kind. Heliodorus, that good bishop of Tricca, rather chose to lose the dignity, profit, and devotion of so venerable a prelacy, than to lose his daughter;[1] a daughter that continues to this day very graceful and comely; but, peradventure, a little too

[1] *i.e.*, His History of Theagines and Chariclea.

curiously and wantonly tricked, and too amorous for an ecclesiastical and sacerdotal daughter. There was one Labienus at Rome, a man of great worth and authority, and, amongst other qualities, excellent in all sorts of literature; who was, as I take it, the son of that great Labienus, the chief of Cæsar's captains in the wars of Gaul; and who, afterwards, siding with Pompey the great, so valiantly maintained his cause, till he was by Cæsar defeated in Spain. This Labienus, of whom I am now speaking, had several enemies, envious of his virtue, and, 'tis likely, the courtiers and minions of the emperors of his time who were very angry at his freedom and the paternal humour which he yet retained against tyranny, with which it is to be supposed he had tinctured his books and writings. His adversaries prosecuted several pieces he had published before the magistrate at Rome, and prevailed so far against him, as to have them condemned to the fire. It was in him that this new example of punishment was begun, which was afterwards continued against others at Rome, to punish even writing and studies with death.[1] There would not be means and matter enough of cruelty, did we not mix with them things that nature has exempted from all sense and suffering, as reputation and the products of the mind, and did we not communicate corporal punishments to the teachings and monuments of the Muses. Now Labienus could not suffer this loss, nor survive these his so dear issue; and therefore caused himself to be conveyed and shut up alive in the monument of his ancestors, where he made shift to kill and bury himself at once. 'Tis hard to show a more vehement paternal affection than this. Cassius Severus, a man of great eloquence and his very intimate friend, seeing his books burned, cried out that by the same sentence they should as well condemn him to the fire too, seeing that he carried in his memory all that they contained.[2] The like accident befel Cremutius Cordus, who being accused of having in his books commended Brutus and Cassius, that dirty, servile, and corrupt senate, and worthy a worse master than Tiberius, condemned his writings to the flame. He was willing to bear them com-

[1] Seneca, Controv., lib. v.

[2] Idem, ibid.

pany and killed himself with fasting. The good Lucan, being condemned by that rascal Nero, at the last gasp of his life when the greater part of his blood was already spent through the veins of his arms which he had caused his physician to open to make him die, and when the cold had seized upon all his extremities, and began to approach his vital parts, the last thing he had in his memory was some of the verses of his Battle of Pharsalia, which he recited, dying with them in his mouth. What was this, but taking a tender and paternal leave of his children, in imitation of the valedictions and embraces wherewith we part from ours, when we come to die, and an effect of that natural inclination, that suggests to our remembrance in this extremity, those things which were dearest to us during the time of our life?

Can we believe that Epicurus, who, as he says himself, dying of the intolerable pain of the stone, had all his consolation in the beauty of the doctrine he left behind him, could have received the same satisfaction from many children, though never so well-conditioned and brought up, had he had them, as he did from the production of so many rich writings? Or that, had it been in his choice to have left behind him a deformed and untoward child, or a foolish and ridiculous book, he, or any other man of his understanding, would not rather have chosen to have run the first misfortune than the other? It had been, for example, peradventure, an impiety in St Augustin, if on the one hand, it had been proposed to him to bury his writings, from which religion has received so great fruit, or on the other, to bury his children, had he had them, had he not rather chosen to bury his children. And I know not whether I had not much rather have begot a very beautiful one, through society with the Muses, than by lying with my wife. To this, such as it is, what I give it, I give absolutely and irrevocably, as men do to their bodily children. That little I have done for it, is no more at my own disposal; it may know many things that are gone from me, and from me hold that which I have not retained; and which, as well as a stranger, I should borrow thence, should I stand in need. If I am wiser than my book, it is richer than I. There are few men addicted to poetry,

who would not be much prouder to be father to the Æneid than to the handsomest youth of Rome; and who would not much better bear the loss of the one than of the other. For according to Aristotle,[1] the poet, of all artificers, is the fondest of his work. 'Tis hard to believe that Epaminondas, who boasted that in lieu of all posterity he left two daughters behind him that would one day do their father honour (meaning the two victories he obtained over the Lacedæmonians), would willingly have consented to exchange these for the most beautiful creatures of all Greece; or that Alexander or Cæsar ever wished to be deprived of the grandeur of their glorious exploits in war, for the convenience of children and heirs, how perfect and accomplished soever. Nay, I make a great question, whether Phidias or any other excellent sculptor would be so solicitous of the preservation and continuance of his natural children, as he would be of a rare statue, which with long labour and study he had perfected according to art. And to those furious and irregular passions that have sometimes inflamed fathers towards their own daughters, and mothers towards their own sons, the like is also found in this other sort of parentage: witness what is related of Pygmalion who, having made the statue of a woman of singular beauty, fell so passionately in love with this work of his, that the gods in favour of his passion inspired it with life.

> "Tentatum mollescit ebur, positoque rigore,
> Subsidit digitis."[2]

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[1] Moral. Nicom., ix. 7.

[2] "The ivory grows pliant under his touch."—OVID, *Metam.*, x. 283.

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE ARMS OF THE PARTHIANS.

'Tis an ill custom and unmanly that the gentlemen of our time have got, not to put on arms but just upon the point of the most extreme necessity, and to lay them by again, so soon as ever there is any show of the danger being over; hence many disorders arise; for every one bustling and running to his arms just when he should go to charge, has his cuirass to buckle on when his companions are already put to rout. Our ancestors were wont to give their head-piece, lance and gauntlets to be carried, but never put off the other pieces so long as there was any work to be done. Our troops are now cumbered and rendered unsightly with the clutter of baggage and servants who cannot be from their masters, by reason they carry their arms. Titus Livius speaking of our nation, "Intolerantissima laboris corpora vix arma humeris gerebant."[1] Many nations do yet, and did anciently, go to war without defensive arms, or with such, at least, as were of very little proof:

"Tegmina queis capitum, raptus de subere cortex."[2]

Alexander, the most adventurous captain that ever was, very seldom wore armour, and such amongst us as slight it, do not by that much harm to the main concern; for if we see some killed for want of it, there are few less whom the lumber of arms helps to destroy, either by being over-burthened, crushed, and cramped with their weight, by a rude shock, or otherwise. For, in plain truth, to observe the weight and thickness of the armour we have now in use, it seems as if we only sought to defend ourselves, and are rather loaded than secured by it. We have enough to do to support its weight, being so manacled and immured,

[1] "Their bodies were so impatient of labour, that they could scarce endure to wear their arms. —LIVY, x. 28.

[2] "Covering their heads with a piece of cork."—*Æncid*, vii. 742.

as if we were only to contend with our own arms, and as if we had not the same obligation to defend them, that they have to defend us. Tacitus[1] gives a pleasant description of the men at arms among our ancient Gauls, who were so armed as only to be able to stand, without power to harm or to be harmed, or to rise again if once struck down. Lucullus,[2] seeing certain soldiers of the Medes, who formed the van of Tigranes' army, heavily armed and very uneasy, as if in prisons of iron, thence conceived hopes with great ease to defeat them, and by them began his charge and victory. And now that our musketeers are in credit, I believe some invention will be found out to immure us for our safety, and to draw us to the war in castles, such as those the ancients loaded their elephants withal.

This humour is far differing from that of the younger Scipio, who sharply reprehended his soldiers for having planted caltrops under water, in a ditch by which those of the town he held besieged might sally out upon him; saying, that those who assaulted should think of attacking, and not to fear; suspecting, with good reason, that this stop they had put to the enemies, would make themselves less vigilant upon their guard. He said also to a young man, who showed him a fine buckler he had, that he was very proud of, "It is a very fine buckler indeed, but a Roman soldier ought to repose greater confidence in his right hand than in his left."

Now 'tis nothing but the not being used to wear it that makes the weight of our armour so intolerable:

> "L'usbergo in dosso haveano, et l'elmo in testa,
> Due di questi guerrier, de' quali io canto;
> Ne notte o di, d' appoi ch' entraro in questa
> Stanza, gl'haveano mai messi da canto;
> Che facile a portar come la vesta
> Era lor, perche in uso l'havean tanto:"[3]

the Emperor Caracalla was wont to march on foot, completely armed, at the head of his army. The Roman

[1] Annals, iii. 43. [2] Plutarch, in vita, c. 13.

[3] "Two of the warriors, of whom I sing, had on each his helmet and cuirass, and never had night or day once laid them by, whilst here they were; those arms, by long practice, were so easy grown and light to bear."—ARIOSTO, cant. xii. 30.

infantry always carried not only a morion, a sword, and a shield (for as to arms, says Cicero, they were so accustomed to have them always on, that they were no more trouble to them than their own limbs, "arma enim, membra militis esse dicunt"[1]), but, moreover, fifteen days' provision, together with a certain number of stakes, wherewith to fortify their camp, sixty pounds in weight. And Marius' soldiers, laden at the same rate, were inured to march in order of battle five leagues in five hours, and sometimes, upon any urgent occasion, six. Their military discipline was much ruder than ours, and accordingly produced much greater effects. The younger Scipio, reforming his army in Spain, ordered his soldiers to eat standing, and nothing that was drest. The jeer that was given a Lacedæmonian soldier is marvellously pat to this purpose, who, in an expedition of war, was reproached for having been seen under the roof of a house: they were so inured to hardship that, let the weather be what it would, it was a shame to be seen under any other cover than the roof of heaven. We should not march our people very far at that rate.

As to what remains, Marcellinus,[2] a man bred up in the Roman wars, curiously observes the manner of the Parthians arming themselves, and the rather, for being so different from that of the Romans. "They had," says he, "armour so woven as to have all the scales fall over one another like so many little feathers; which did nothing hinder the motion of the body, and yet were of such resistance, that our darts hitting upon them, would rebound" (these were the coats of mail our forefathers were so constantly wont to use). And in another place;[3] "they had," says he, "strong and able horses, covered with thick tanned hides of leather, and were themselves armed *cap-à-pié* with great plates of iron, so artificially ordered, that in all parts of the limbs, which required bending, they lent themselves to the motion. One would have said, that they had been men of iron; having armour for the head so neatly fitted, and so naturally representing the form of a face, that they were nowhere vulnerable, save at two little

[1] Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., ii. 16.
[2] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiv. 7.
[3] Idem, xxv. 1.

round holes, that gave them a little light, corresponding with their eyes, and certain small chinks about their nostrils, through which they, with great difficulty, breathed,"

> "Flexilis inductis animatur lamina membris,
> Horribilis visu; credas simulacra moveri
> Ferrea, cognatoque viros spirare metallo.
> Par vestitus equis: ferrata fronte minantur,
> Ferratosque movent, securi vulneris, armos."[1]

'Tis a description very near resembling the equipage of the men-at-arms in France, with their barded horses. Plutarch says,[2] that Demetrius caused two complete suits of armour to be made for himself and for Alcimus, a captain of the greatest note and authority about him, of sixscore pounds weight each, whereas the ordinary suits weighed but half so much.

CHAPTER X.

OF BOOKS.

I MAKE no doubt but that I often happen to speak of things that are much better and more truly handled by those who are masters of the trade. You have here purely an essay of my natural parts, and not of those acquired: and whoever shall catch me tripping in ignorance, will not in any sort get the better of me; for I should be very unwilling to become responsible to another for my writings, who am not so to myself, nor satisfied with them. Whoever goes in quest of knowledge, let him fish for it where it is to be found; there is nothing I so little profess. These are

[1] "Plates of steel are placed over the body so flexible that, dreadful to be seen, you would think these not living men, but moving images. The horses, like-armed, wear spikes in front, and move secured from wounds by armour on their iron shoulders."—CLAUD. *in Ruf.*, ii. 358.

[2] Life of Demetrius, c. 6.

fancies of my own, by which I do not pretend to discover things but to lay open myself; they may, peradventure, one day be known to me, or have formerly been, according as fortune has been able to bring me in place where they have been explained; but I have utterly forgotten it; and if I am a man of some reading, I am a man of no retention; so that I can promise no certainty, more than to make known to what point the knowledge I now have has risen. Therefore, let none lay stress upon the matter I write, but upon my method in writing it. Let them observe, in what I borrow, if I have known how to choose what is proper to raise or help the invention, which is always my own. For I make others say for me, not before but after me, what, either for want of language or want of sense, I cannot myself so well express. I do not number my borrowings, I weigh them; and had I designed to raise their value by number, I had made them twice as many; they are all, or within a very few, so famed and ancient authors, that they seem, methinks, themselves sufficiently to tell who they are, without giving me the trouble. In reasons, comparisons, and arguments, if I transplant any into my own soil, and confound them amongst my own, I purposely conceal the author, to awe the temerity of those precipitate censors who fall upon all sorts of writings, particularly the late ones, of men yet living, and in the vulgar tongue which puts every one into a capacity of criticising and which seem to convict the conception and design as vulgar also. I will have them give Plutarch a fillip on my nose, and rail against Seneca when they think they rail at me. I must shelter my own weakness under these great reputations. I shall love any one that can unplume me, that is, by clearness of understanding and judgment, and by the sole distinction of the force and beauty of the discourse. For I who, for want of memory, am at every turn at a loss to pick them out of their national livery, am yet wise enough to know, by the measure of my own abilities, that my soil is incapable of producing any of those rich flowers that I there find growing; and that all the fruits of my own growth are not worth any one of them. For this, indeed, I hold myself responsible; if I get in my own way; if there be any

vanity and defect in my writings which I do not of myself perceive nor can discern, when pointed out to me by another; for many faults escape our eye, but the infirmity of judgment consists in not being able to discern them when, by another laid open to us. Knowledge and truth may be in us without judgment, and judgment also without them; but the confession of ignorance is one of the finest and surest testimonies of judgment that I know. I have no other officer to put my writings in rank and file, but only fortune. (As things come into my head, I heap them one upon another; sometimes they advance in whole bodies, sometimes in single file. I would that every one should see my natural and ordinary pace, irregular as it is;) I suffer myself to jog on at my own rate. Neither are these subjects which a man is not permitted to be ignorant in, or casually and at a venture, to discourse of. I could wish to have a more perfect knowledge of things, but I will not buy it so dear as it costs. My design is to pass over easily, and not laboriously, the remainder of my life; there is nothing that I will cudgel my brains about; no, not even knowledge, of what value soever.

I seek, in the reading of books, only to please myself, by an honest diversion; or, if I study, 'tis for no other science than what treats of the knowledge of myself, and instructs me how to die and how to live well.

"Has meus ad metas sudet oportet equus."[1]

I do not bite my nails about the difficulties I meet with in my reading; after a charge or two, I give them over. Should I insist upon them, I should both lose myself and time; for I have an impatient understanding, that must be satisfied at first: what I do not discern at once, is by persistence rendered more obscure. I do nothing without gaiety; continuation and a too obstinate endeavour, darkens, stupefies, and tires my judgment. My sight is confounded and dissipated with poring; I must withdraw it, and refer my discovery to new attempts; just as to judge rightly of the lustre of scarlet, we are taught to pass the eye lightly

[1] "My horse must be trained to this course."—PROPERTIUS, iv. 1, 70.

over it, and again to run it over at several sudden and reiterated glances. If one book do not please me, I take another; and never meddle with any, but at such times as I am weary of doing nothing. I care not much for new ones, because the old seem fuller and stronger; neither do I converse much with Greek authors, because my judgment cannot do its work with imperfect intelligence of the material.[1]

Amongst books that are simply pleasant, of the moderns, Boccaccio's Decameron, Rabelais, and the Basia of Johannes Secundus (if those may be ranged under the title) are worth reading for amusement. As to Amadis, and such kind of stuff, they had not credit to take me, so much as in my childhood. And I will, moreover, say, whether boldly or rashly, that this old, heavy soul of mine is now no longer tickled with Ariosto, no, nor with Ovid; his facility and inventions, with which I was formerly so ravished, are now of no more relish, and I can hardly have the patience to read them. I speak my opinion freely of all things, even of those that, perhaps, exceed my capacity, and that I do not conceive to be, in any wise, under my jurisdiction. And, accordingly, the judgment I deliver, is to show the measure of my own sight, and not of the things I make so bold to criticise. When I find myself disgusted with Plato's "Axiochus,"[2] as with a work, with due respect to such an author be it spoken, without force, my judgment does not believe itself: it is not so arrogant as to oppose the authority of so many other famous judgments of antiquity, which it considers as its tutors and masters, and with whom it is rather content to err; in such a case, it condemns itself either to stop at the outward bark, not being able to penetrate to the heart, or to consider it by some false light. It is content with only securing itself from trouble and disorder; as to its own weakness, it frankly acknowledges and confesses it. It thinks it gives a just interpretation to the appearances by its conceptions

[1] Montaigne refers to his imperfect knowledge of the Greek language.

[2] The "Axiochus" is not by Plato, as Diogenes Laertius admitted. It is attributed by some to Æschines the Socratic, and by others to Xenocrates of Chalcedon.—LE CLERC.

presented to it; but they are weak and imperfect. Most of the fables of Æsop have diverse senses and meanings, of which the mythologists chose some one that quadrates well to the fable; but, for the most part, 'tis but the first face that presents itself and is superficial only; there yet remain others more vivid, essential, and profound, into which they have not been able to penetrate; and just so 'tis with me.

But, to pursue the business of this essay, I have always thought that, in poesy, Virgil, Lucretius, Catullus, and Horace by many degrees excel the rest; and signally, Virgil in his Georgics, which I look upon as the most accomplished piece in poetry; and in comparison of which a man may easily discern that there are some places in his Æneids, to which the author would have given a little more of the file, had he had leisure: and the fifth book of his Æneids seems to me the most perfect. I also love Lucan, and willingly read him, not so much for his style, as for his own worth, and the truth and solidity of his opinions and judgments. As for Terence, that model of the refined elegancies and grace of the Latin tongue, I find him admirable in his vivid representation of our manners and the movements of the soul; our actions throw me at every turn, upon him; and I cannot read him so often that I do not still discover some new grace and beauty. Such as lived near Virgil's time were scandalised that some should compare him with Lucretius. I am, I confess, of opinion that the comparison is, in truth, very unequal; a belief that, nevertheless, I have much ado to assure myself in, when I come upon some excellent passage in Lucretius. But if they were so angry at this comparison, what would they say to the brutish and barbarous stupidity of those who, nowadays, compare him with Ariosto? Would not Ariosto himself say

"O seclum insipiens et inficetum!"?[1]

I think the ancients had more reason to be angry with those who compared Plautus with Terence, though much nearer the mark, than Lucretius with Virgil. It makes

[1] "O stupid and tasteless age."—CATULLUS, xliii. 8.

much for the estimation and preference of Terence, that the father of Roman eloquence has him so often, and alone of his class, in his mouth; and the opinion that the best judge of Roman poets[1] has passed upon his companion. I have often observed that those of our times, who take upon them to write comedies (in imitation of the Italians, who are happy enough in that way of writing), take three or four plots of those of Plautus or Terence to make one of their own, and crowd five or six of Boccaccio's novels into one single comedy. That which makes them so load themselves with matter is the diffidence they have of being able to support themselves with their own strength. They must find out something to lean to; and not having of their own stuff wherewith to entertain us, they bring in the story to supply the defect of language. It is quite otherwise with my author; the elegance and perfection of his way of speaking makes us lose the appetite of his plot; his refined grace and elegance of diction everywhere occupy us: he is so pleasant throughout,

"Liquidus, puroque simillimus amni,"[2]

and so possesses the soul with his graces that we forget those of his fable. This same consideration carries me further: I observe that the best of the ancient poets have avoided affectation and the hunting after, not only fantastic Spanish and Petrarchal elevations, but even the softer and more gentle touches, which are the ornament of all succeeding poesy. And yet there is no good judgment that will condemn this in the ancients, and that does not incomparably more admire the equal polish, and that perpetual sweetness and flourishing beauty of Catullus's epigrams, than all the stings with which Martial arms the tails of his. This is by the same reason that I gave before, and as Martial says of himself: "Minus illi ingenio laborandum fuit, in cujus locum materia successerat."[3] The first, without being moved, or without getting angry, make themselves sufficiently felt; they have matter enough of laughter

[1] Horace, de Art. Poetica, 279.

[2] "Liquid, and like a crystal stream."—HORACE, *Ep.*, ii. 2, 120.

[3] "He had all the less for his wit to do that the subject itself supplied what was necessary."—MARTIAL, *præf. ad lib.* viii.

throughout, they need not tickle themselves; the others have need of foreign assistance; as they have the less wit they must have the more body; they mount on horseback, because they are not able to stand on their own legs. As in our balls, those mean fellows who teach to dance, not being able to represent the presence and dignity of our noblesse, are fain to put themselves forward with dangerous jumping, and other strange motions and tumblers' tricks; and the ladies are less put to it in dances, where there are various coupees, changes, and quick motions of body, than in some other of a more sedate kind, where they are only to move a natural pace, and to represent their ordinary grace and presence. And so I have seen good drolls, when in their own everyday clothes, and with the same face they always wear, give us all the pleasure of their art, when their apprentices, not yet arrived at such a pitch of perfection, are fain to meal their faces, put themselves into ridiculous disguises, and make a hundred grotesque faces to give us whereat to laugh. This conception of mine is nowhere more demonstrable than in comparing the Æneid with Orlando Furioso; of which we see the first, by dint of wing, flying in a brave and lofty place, and always following his point; the latter, fluttering and hopping from tale to tale, as from branch to branch, not daring to trust his wings but in very short flights, and perching at every turn, lest his breath and strength should fail;

"Excursusque breves tentat." [1]

These, then, as to this sort of subjects, are the authors that best please me.

As to what concerns my other reading, that mixes a little more profit with the pleasure, and whence I learn how to marshal my opinions and conditions, the books that serve me to this purpose are Plutarch, since he has been translated into French, and Seneca. Both of these have this notable convenience suited to my humour, that the knowledge I there seek is discoursed in loose pieces, that do not require from me any trouble of reading long, of which I am incapable. Such are the minor works of the first and the

1 "Making short runs."—VIRGIL, *Georgics*, iv. 194.

epistles of the latter, which are the best and most profiting of all their writings. 'Tis no great attempt to take one of them in hand, and I give over at pleasure; for they have no sequence or dependence upon one another. These authors, for the most part, concur in useful and true opinions; and there is this parallel betwixt them, that fortune brought them into the world about the same century: they were both tutors to two Roman emperors: both sought out from foreign countries: both rich and both great men. Their instruction is the cream of philosophy, and delivered after a plain and pertinent manner. Plutarch is more uniform and constant; Seneca more various and waving: the last toiled and bent his whole strength to fortify virtue against weakness, fear, and vicious appetites; the other seems more to slight their power, and to disdain to alter his pace and to stand upon his guard. Plutarch's opinions are Platonic, gentle, and accommodated to civil society; those of the other are Stoical and Epicurean, more remote from the common use, but, in my opinion, more individually commodious and more firm. Seneca seems to lean a little to the tyranny of the emperors of his time, and only seems; for I take it for certain that he speaks against his judgment when he condemns the action of the generous murderers of Cæsar. Plutarch is frank throughout: Seneca abounds with brisk touches and sallies; Plutarch with things that heat and move you more; this contents and pays you better: he guides us, the other pushes us on.

As to Cicero, those of his works that are most useful to my design are they that treat of philosophy, especially moral. But boldly to confess the truth (for since one has passed the barriers of impudence, off with the bridle), his way of writing, and that of all other long-winded authors, appears to me very tedious: for his prefaces, definitions, divisions, and etymologies take up the greatest part of his work: whatever there is of life and marrow is smothered and lost in the long preparation. When I have spent an hour in reading him, which is a great deal for me, and try to recollect what I have thence extracted of juice and substance, for the most part I find nothing but wind; for he is not yet come to the arguments that serve to his purpose, and to the reasons that properly help to form the

knot I seek. For me, who only desire to become more wise, not more learned or eloquent, these logical and Aristotelian dispositions of parts are of no use. I would have a man begin with the main proposition. I know well enough what death and pleasure are; let no man give himself the trouble to anatomise them to me. I look for good and solid reasons, at the first dash, to instruct me how to stand their shock, for which purpose neither grammatical subtleties nor the quaint contexture of words and argumentations are of any use at all. I am for discourses that give the first charge into the heart of the redoubt; his languish about the subject; they are proper for the schools, for the bar, and for the pulpit, where we have leisure to nod, and may awake, a quarter of an hour after, time enough to find again the thread of the discourse. It is necessary to speak after this manner to judges, whom a man has a design to gain over, right or wrong, to children and common people, to whom a man must say all, and see what will come of it. I would not have an author make it his business to render me attentive: or that he should cry out fifty times *Oyez*, as the heralds do. The Romans, in their religious exercises, began with *Hoc age:* as we in ours do with *Sursum corda;* these are so many words lost to me: I come already fully prepared from my chamber. I need no allurement, no invitation, no sauce; I eat the meat raw, so that, instead of whetting my appetite by these preparatives, they tire and pall it. Will the license of the time excuse my sacrilegious boldness if I censure the dialogism of Plato himself as also dull and heavy, too much stifling the matter, and lament so much time lost by a man, who had so many better things to say, in so many long and needless preliminary interlocutions? My ignorance will better excuse me in that I understand not Greek so well as to discern the beauty of his language. I generally choose books that use sciences, not such as only lead to them. The two first, and Pliny, and their like, have nothing of this *Hoc age;* they will have to do with men already instructed; or if they have, 'tis a substantial *Hoc age*, and that has a body by itself. I also delight in reading the Epistles to Atticus, not only because they contain a great deal of the history and affairs of his time, but much more because I therein dis-

cover much of his own private humours; for I have a singular curiosity, as I have said elsewhere, to pry into the souls and the natural and true opinions of the authors with whom I converse. A man may indeed judge of their parts, but not of their manners nor of themselves, by the writings they exhibit upon the theatre of the world. I have a thousand times lamented the loss of the treatise Brutus wrote upon virtue, for it is well to learn the theory from those who best know the practice. But seeing the matter preached and the preacher are different things, I would as willingly see Brutus in Plutarch, as in a book of his own. I would rather choose to be certainly informed of the conference he had in his tent with some particular friends of his the night before a battle, than of the harangue he made the next day to his army; and of what he did in his closet and his chamber, than what he did in the public square and in the senate. As to Cicero, I am of the common opinion that, learning excepted, he had no great natural excellence. He was a good citizen, of an affable nature, as all fat, heavy men, such as he was, usually are; but given to ease, and had, in truth, a mighty share of vanity and ambition. Neither do I know how to excuse him for thinking his poetry fit to be published; 'tis no great imperfection to make ill verses, but it is an imperfection not to be able to judge how unworthy his verses were of the glory of his name. For what concerns his eloquence, that is totally out of all comparison, and I believe it will never be equalled. The younger Cicero, who resembled his father in nothing but in name, whilst commanding in Asia, had several strangers one day at his table, and, amongst the rest, Cestius seated at the lower end, as men often intrude to the open tables of the great. Cicero asked one of his people who that man was, who presently told him his name; but he, as one who had his thoughts taken up with something else, and who had forgotten the answer made him, asking three or four times, over and over again, the same question, the fellow, to deliver himself from so many answers and to make him know him by some particular circumstance; "'tis that Cestius," said he, "of whom it was told you, that he makes no great account of your father's eloquence in comparison of his

own." At which Cicero, being suddenly nettled, commanded poor Cestius presently to be seized, and caused him to be very well whipped in his own presence;[1] a very discourteous entertainer! Yet even amongst those, who, all things considered, have reputed his eloquence incomparable, there have been some, who have not stuck to observe some faults in it; as that great Brutus his friend, for example, who said 'twas a broken and feeble eloquence, *fractam et elumbem*.[2] The orators also, nearest to the age wherein he lived, reprehended in him the care he had of a certain long cadence in his periods, and particularly took notice of these words, *esse videatur*, which he there so often makes use of.[3] For my part, I more approve of a shorter style, and that comes more roundly off. He does, though, sometimes shuffle his parts more briskly together, but 'tis very seldom. I have myself taken notice of this one passage: "Ego vero me minus diu senem mallem, quam esse senem antequam essem."[4]

The historians are my right ball, for they are pleasant and easy, and where man, in general, the knowledge of whom I hunt after, appears more vividly and entire than anywhere else:[5] the variety and truth of his internal qualities, in gross and piecemeal, the diversity of means by which he is united and knit, and the accidents that threaten him. Now those that write lives, by reason they insist more upon counsels than events, more upon what sallies from within, than upon what happens without, are the most proper for my reading; and, therefore, above all others, Plutarch is the man for me. I am very sorry we have not a dozen Laertii,[6] or that he was not further extended; for I am equally curious to know the lives and fortunes of these great instructors of the world, as to know the diversities of their doctrines and opinions. In this

[1] Seneca, Suasor, 8.
[2] Tacitus, De Oratoribus, c. 18. [3] Idem, ibid., c. 23.
[4] "I had rather be old a brief time, than be old before old age." —CICERO, *De Senect.*, c. 10.
[5] *i.e.*, The easiest of my amusements, the right ball, at tennis, being that which coming to the player from the right hand, is much easier played with.—COSTE.
[6] Diogenes Laertius, who wrote the lives of the philosophers.

kind of study of histories, a man must tumble over, without distinction, all sorts of authors, old and new, French or foreign, there to know the things of which they variously treat. But Cæsar, in my opinion, particularly deserves to be studied, not for the knowledge of the history only, but for himself, so great an excellence and perfection he has above all the rest, though Sallust be one of the number. In earnest, I read this author with more reverence and respect than is usually allowed to human writings; one while considering him in his person, by his actions and miraculous greatness, and another in the purity and inimitable polish of his language, wherein he not only excels all other historians, as Cicero confesses,[1] but, peradventure, even Cicero himself; speaking of his enemies with so much sincerity in his judgment, that, the false colours with which he strives to palliate his evil cause, and the ordure of his pestilent ambition excepted, I think there is no fault to be objected against him, saving this, that he speaks too sparingly of himself, seeing so many great things could not have been performed under his conduct, but that his own personal acts must necessarily have had a greater share in them than he attributes to them.

I love historians, whether of the simple sort, or of the higher order. The simple, who have nothing of their own to mix with it, and who only make it their business to collect all that comes to their knowledge, and faithfully to record all things, without choice or discrimination, leave to us the entire judgment of discerning the truth. Such, for example amongst others, is honest Froissart, who has proceeded in his undertaking with so frank a plainness that, having committed an error, he is not ashamed to confess, and correct it in the place where the finger has been laid, and who represents to us even the variety of rumours that were then spread abroad, and the different reports that were made to him; 'tis the naked and inform matter of history, and of which every one may make his profit, according to his understanding. The more excellent sort of historians have judgment to pick out what is most worthy to be known; and, of two reports, to examine

[1] Cicero, Brutus, c. 75.

which is the most likely to be true: from the condition of princes and their humours, they conclude their counsels, and attribute to them words proper for the occasion; such have title to assume the authority of regulating our belief to what they themselves believe; but certainly, this privilege belongs to very few. For the middle sort of historians, of which the most part are, they spoil all; they will chew our meat for us; they take upon them to judge of, and consequently, to incline the history to their own fancy; for if the judgment lean to one side, a man cannot avoid wresting and writhing his narrative to that bias; they undertake to select things worthy to be known, and yet often conceal from us such a word, such a private action, as would much better instruct us; omit, as incredible, such things as they do not understand, and peradventure some, because they cannot express them well in good French or Latin. Let them display their eloquence and intelligence, and judge according to their own fancy: but let them, withal, leave us something to judge of after them, and neither alter nor disguise, by their abridgments and at their own choice, anything of the substance of the matter, but deliver it to us pure and entire in all its dimensions.

For the most part, and especially in these latter ages, persons are culled out for this work from amongst the common people, upon the sole consideration of well-speaking, as if we were to learn grammar from them; and the men so chosen have fair reason, being hired for no other end and pretending to nothing but babble, not to be very solicitous of any part but that, and so, with a fine jingle of words, prepare us a pretty contexture of reports they pick up in the streets. The only good histories are those that have been written by the persons themselves who held command in the affairs whereof they write, or who participated in the conduct of them, or, at least, who have had the conduct of others of the same nature. Such are almost all the Greek and Roman histories: for, several eye-witnesses having written of the same subject, in the time when grandeur and learning commonly met in the same person, if there happen to be an error, it must of necessity be a very slight one, and upon a very doubtful incident. What

can a man expect from a physician who writes of war, or from a mere scholar, treating of the designs of princes? If we could take notice how scrupulous the Romans were in this, there would need but this example: Asinius Pollio found in the histories of Cæsar himself, something misreported, a mistake occasioned, either by reason he could not have his eye in all parts of his army at once and had given credit to some individual persons who had not delivered him a very true account; or else, for not having had too perfect notice given him by his lieutenants of what they had done in his absence.[1] By which we may see, whether the inquisition after truth be not very delicate, when a man cannot believe the report of a battle from the knowledge of him who there commanded, nor from the soldiers who were engaged in it, unless, after the method of a judicial inquiry, the witnesses be confronted and objections considered upon the proof of the least detail of every incident. In good earnest the knowledge we have of our own affairs, is much more obscure: but that has been sufficiently handled by Bodin, and according to my own sentiment.[2] A little to aid the weakness of my memory (so extreme that it has happened to me more than once, to take books again into my hand as new and unseen, that I had carefully read over a few years before, and scribbled with my notes) I have adopted a custom of late, to note at the end of every book (that is, of those I never intend to read again) the time when I made an end on't, and the judgment I had made of it, to the end that this might, at least, represent to me the character and general idea I had conceived of the author in reading it; and I will here transcribe some of those annotations. I wrote this, some ten years ago, in my Guicciardini (of what language soever my books speak to me in, I always speak to them in my own): "He is a diligent historiographer, from whom, in my opinion, a man may learn the truth of the affairs of his time, as exactly as from any other; in the most of which he was himself also a personal actor, and in honourable command. There is no appearance that he disguised anything, either upon

[1] Suetonius, Life of Cæsar, c. 56.

[2] In the work, by Jean Bodin, entitled "Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem." 1566

the account of hatred, favour, or vanity; of which the free censures he passes upon the great ones, and particularly, those by whom he was advanced and employed in commands of great trust and honour, as Pope Clement VII., give ample testimony. As to that part which he thinks himself the best at, namely, his digressions and discourses, he has indeed some very good, and enriched with fine features; but he is too fond of them: for, to leave nothing unsaid, having a subject so full, ample, almost infinite, he degenerates into pedantry and smacks a little of scholastic prattle. I have also observed this in him, that of so many souls and so many effects, so many motives and so many counsels as he judges, he never attributes any one to virtue, religion, or conscience, as if all these were utterly extinct in the world: and of all the actions, how brave soever in outward show they appear in themselves, he always refers the cause and motive to some vicious occasion or some prospect of profit. It is impossible to imagine but that, amongst such an infinite number of actions as he makes mention of, there must be some one produced by the way of honest reason. No corruption could so universally have infected men that some one would not escape the contagion: which makes me suspect, that his own taste was vicious, whence it might happen that he judged other men by himself."

In my Philip de Comines, there is this written: "You will here find the language sweet and delightful, of a natural simplicity, the narration pure, with the good faith of the author conspicuous therein; free from vanity, when speaking of himself, and from affection or envy, when speaking of others: his discourses and exhortations rather accompanied with zeal and truth, than with any exquisite sufficiency; and, throughout, authority and gravity, which bespeak him a man of good extraction, and brought up in great affairs."

Upon the Memoirs of Monsieur du Bellay I find this: "'Tis always pleasant to read things written by those that have experienced how they ought to be carried on; but withal, it cannot be denied but there is a manifest decadence in these two lords[1] from the freedom and liberty of

[1] Martin du Bellay and Guillaume de Langey, brothers, who jointly wrote the Memoirs.

writing that shine in the elder historians, such as the Sire de Joinville, the familiar companion of St. Louis; Eginhard, chancellor to Charlemagne; and of later date, Philip de Comines. What we have here is rather an apology for King Francis, against the Emperor Charles V., than history. I will not believe that they have falsified anything, as to matter of fact; but they make a common practice of twisting the judgment of events, very often contrary to reason, to our advantage, and of omitting whatsoever is ticklish to be handled in the life of their master; witness the proceedings of Messieurs de Montmorency and de Biron, which are here omitted: nay, so much as the very name of Madame d'Estampes is not here to be found. Secret actions an historian may conceal; but to pass over in silence what all the world knows and things that have drawn after them public and such high consequences, is an inexcusable defect. In fine, whoever has a mind to have a perfect knowledge of King Francis and the events of his reign, let him seek it elsewhere, if my advice may prevail. The only profit a man can reap from these Memoirs is in the special narrative of battles and other exploits of war wherein these gentlemen were personally engaged; in some words and private actions of the princes of their time, and in the treaties and negotiations carried on by the Seigneur de Langey, where there are everywhere things worthy to be known, and discourses above the vulgar strain."

CHAPTER XI.

OF CRUELTY.

I FANCY virtue to be something else, and something more noble, than good nature, and the mere propension to goodness, that we are born into the world withal. Well-disposed and well-descended souls pursue, indeed, the same methods, and represent in their actions the same face that virtue itself does: but the word virtue imports something

more great and active than merely for a man to suffer himself, by a happy disposition, to be gently and quietly drawn to the rule of reason. He who, by a natural sweetness and facility, should despise injuries received, would, doubtless, do a very fine and laudable thing; but he who, provoked and nettled to the quick by an offence, should fortify himself with the arms of reason against the furious appetite of revenge, and, after a great conflict, master his own passion, would certainly do a great deal more. The first would do well; the latter virtuously: one action might be called goodness, and the other virtue; for, methinks, the very name of virtue presupposes difficulty and contention, and cannot be exercised without an opponent. 'Tis for this reason, perhaps, that we call God good, mighty, liberal, and just; but we do not call Him virtuous, being that all His operations are natural and without endeavour.[1] It has been the opinion of many philosophers, not only Stoics, but Epicureans—(and this addition[2] I borrow from the vulgar opinion, which is false, notwithstanding the witty conceit of Arcesilaus in answer to one, who, being reproached that many scholars went from his school to the Epicurean, but never any from thence to his school, said in answer, "I believe it indeed; numbers of capons being made out of cocks, but never any cocks out of capons."[3] For, in truth, the Epicurean sect is not at all inferior to the Stoic in steadiness, and the rigour of opinions and precepts. And a

[1] Rousseau, in his "Emile," book v., adopts this passage, almost in the same words.

[2] "Montaigne stops here to make his excuse for thus naming the Epicureans with the Stoics, in conformity to the general opinion that the Epicureans were not so rigid in their morals as the Stoics, which is not true in the main, as he demonstrates at one view. This involved Montaigne in a tedious parenthesis, during which it is proper that the reader be attentive, that he may not entirely lose the thread of the argument. In some later additions of this author, it has been attempted to remedy this inconvenience, but without observing that Montaigne's argument is rendered more feeble and obscure by such vain repetitions: it is a licence that ought not to be taken, because he who publishes the work of another, ought to give it as the other composed it. But, in Mr. Cotton's translation, he was so puzzled with this enormous parenthesis that he has quite left it out."—COSTE.

[3] Diogenes Laertius, Life of Arcesilaus, lib. iv. § 43.

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certain Stoic, showing more honesty than those disputants, who, in order to quarrel with Epicurus, and to throw the game into their hands, make him say what he never thought, putting a wrong construction upon his words, clothing his sentences, by the strict rules of grammar, with another meaning, and a different opinion from that which they knew he entertained in his mind, and in his morals, the Stoic, I say, declared that he abandoned the Epicurean sect, upon this, among other considerations, that he thought their road too lofty and inaccessible; "Et ii qui φιλήδονοι vocantur sunt φιλόκαλοι et φιλοδίκαιοι, omnesque virtutes et colunt et retinent"[1])—these philosophers say that it is not enough to have the soul seated in a good place, of a good temper, and well disposed to virtue; it is not enough to have our resolutions and our reasoning fixed above all the power of fortune, but that we are, moreover, to seek occasions wherein to put them to the proof: they would seek pain, necessity, and contempt, to contend with them and to keep the soul in breath: "Multum sibi adjicit virtus lacessita."[2] 'Tis one of the reasons why Epaminondas, who was yet of a third sect,[3] refused the riches fortune presented to him by very lawful means; because, said he, "I am to contend with poverty," in which extreme he maintained himself to the last. Socrates put himself, methinks, upon a ruder trial, keeping for his exercise a confounded scolding wife, which was fighting at sharps. Metellus having, of all the Roman Senators, alone attempted, by the power of virtue, to withstand the violence of Saturninus, tribune of the people at Rome, who would, by all means, cause an unjust law to pass in favour of the commons, and, by so doing, having incurred the capital penalties that Saturninus had established against the dissentient, entertained those who, in this extremity, led him to execution with words to this effect: That it was a thing too easy and too base to do ill; and that to do well where there was no danger was a common thing; but that to do well where there was danger was the proper office of a

[1] "And those whom we call lovers of pleasure, being, in effect, lovers of honour and justice, cultivate and practise all the virtues."—CICERO, *Ep. Fam.* xv. 1, 19.

[2] "Virtue is much strengthened by combats."—SENECA, *Ep.* 15.

[3] The Pythagorean.

man of virtue.[1] These words of Metellus very clearly represent to us what I would make out, viz., that virtue refuses facility for a companion; and that the easy, smooth, and descending way by which the regular steps of a sweet disposition of nature are conducted is not that of a true virtue; she requires a rough and stormy passage; she will have either exotic difficulties to wrestle with, like that of Metellus, by means whereof fortune delights to interrupt the speed of her career, or internal difficulties, that the inordinate appetites and imperfections of our condition introduce to disturb her

I am come thus far at my ease; but here it comes into my head that the soul of Socrates, the most perfect that ever came to my knowledge, should, by this rule, be of very little recommendation; for I cannot conceive in that person any the least motion of a vicious inclination: I cannot imagine there could be any difficulty or constraint in the course of his virtue: I know his reason to be so powerful and sovereign over him that she would never have suffered a vicious appetite so much as to spring in him. To a virtue so elevated as his, I have nothing to oppose. Methinks I see him march, with a victorious and triumphant pace, in pomp and at his ease, without opposition or disturbance. If virtue cannot shine bright, but by the conflict of contrary appetites, shall we then say that she cannot subsist without the assistance of vice, and that it is from her that she derives her reputation and honour? What then, also, would become of that brave and generous Epicurean pleasure, which makes account that it nourishes virtue tenderly in her lap, and there makes it play and wanton, giving it for toys to play withal, shame, fevers, poverty, death, and torments? If I presuppose that a perfect virtue manifests itself in contending, in patient enduring of pain, and undergoing the uttermost extremity of the gout, without being moved in her seat; if I give her troubles and difficulty for her necessary objects: what will become of a virtue elevated to such a degree, as not only to despise pain, but, moreover, to rejoice in it, and to be tickled with the daggers of a sharp gout, such as the Epicureans have established, and of which many

[1] Plutarch, Life of Marius, c, 10.

of them, by their actions, have given most manifest proofs? As have several others, who I find to have surpassed in effects even the very rules of their discipline; witness the younger Cato: when I see him die, and tearing out his own bowels, I am not satisfied simply to believe that he had then his soul totally exempt from all trouble and horror: I cannot think that he only maintained himself in the steadiness that the Stoical rules prescribed him; temperate, without emotion and imperturbed. There was, methinks, something in the virtue of this man too sprightly and fresh to stop there; I believe that, without doubt, he felt a pleasure and delight in so noble an action, and was more pleased in it than in any other of his life: "Sic abiit è vita, ut causam moriendi nactum se esse gauderet."[1] I believe it so thoroughly that I question whether he would have been content to have been deprived of the occasion of so brave an execution; and if the goodness that made him embrace the public concern more than his own, withheld me not, I should easily fall into an opinion that he thought himself obliged to fortune for having put his virtue upon so brave a trial, and for having favoured that thief[2] in treading underfoot the ancient liberty of his country. Methinks I read in this action I know not what exaltation in his soul, and an extraordinary and manly emotion of pleasure when he looked upon the generosity and height of his enterprise:

"Deliberata morte ferocior,"[3]

not stimulated with any hope of glory, as the popular and effeminate judgments of some have concluded (for that consideration was too mean and low to possess so generous, so haughty, and so determined a heart as his), but for the very beauty of the thing in itself, which he who had the handling of the springs discerned more clearly and in its perfection than we are able to do. Philosophy has obliged me in determining that so brave an action had been indecently placed in any other life than that of Cato; and that it only

[1] "He quitted life, rejoicing that a reason for dying had arisen." —CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, i. 30. [2] Cæsar.

[3] "Bolder because he had determined to die."—HORACE, *Od.* i. 37, 29.

appertained to his to end so; notwithstanding, and according to reason, he commanded his son and the senators who accompanied him to take another course in their affairs: "Catoni, quum incredibilem natura tribuisset gravitatem, eamque ipse perpetua constantia roboravisset, semperque in proposito consilio permansisset, moriendum potius, quam tyranni vultus aspiciendus, erat."[1] Every death ought to hold proportion with the life before it; we do not become others for dying. I always interpret the death by the life preceding; and if any one tell me of a death strong and constant in appearance, annexed to a feeble life, I conclude it produced by some feeble cause, and suitable to the life before. The easiness then of this death and the facility of dying he had acquired by the vigour of his soul; shall we say that it ought to abate anything of the lustre of his virtue? And who, that has his brain never so little tinctured with the true philosophy, can be content to imagine Socrates only free from fear and passion in the accident of his prison, fetters and condemnation? and that will not discover in him not only firmness and constancy (which was his ordinary condition), but, moreover, I know not what new satisfaction, and a frolic cheerfulness in his last words and actions? In the start he gave with the pleasure of scratching his leg when his irons were taken off, does he not discover an equal serenity and joy in his soul for being freed from past inconveniences, and at the same time to enter into the knowledge of things to come? Cato shall pardon me, if he please; his death indeed is more tragical and more lingering; but yet this is, I know not how, methinks, finer. Aristippus, to one that was lamenting this death: "The gods grant me such a one," said he.[2] A man discerns in the soul of these two great men and their imitators (for I very much doubt whether there were ever their equals) so perfect a habitude to virtue, that it was turned to a complexion. It is no longer a laborious virtue, nor the precepts of reason, to maintain which the soul is so

[1] "Nature having endued Cato with an incredible gravity, which he had also fortified with a perpetual constancy, without ever flagging in his resolution, he must of necessity rather die than see the face of the tyrant."—CICERO, *De Offic.*, i. 31.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 76.

racked, but the very essence of their soul, its natural and ordinary habit; they have rendered it such by a long practise of philosophical precepts having lit upon a rich and fine nature; the vicious passions that spring in us can find no entrance into them; the force and vigour of their soul stifle and extinguish irregular desires, so soon as they begin to move.

Now, that it is not more noble, by a high and divine resolution, to hinder the birth of temptations, and to be so formed to virtue, that the very seeds of vice are rooted out, than to hinder by main force their progress; and, having suffered ourselves to be surprised with the first motions of the passions, to arm ourselves and to stand firm to oppose their progress, and overcome them; and that this second effect is not also much more generous than to be simply endowed with a facile and affable nature, of itself disaffected to debauchery and vice, I do not think can be doubted; for this third and last sort of virtue seems to render a man innocent, but not virtuous; free from doing ill, but not apt enough to do well: considering also, that this condition is so near neighbour to imperfection and cowardice, that I know not very well how to separate the confines and distinguish them: the very names of goodness and innocence are, for this reason, in some sort grown into contempt. I very well know that several virtues, as chastity, sobriety, and temperance, may come to a man through personal defects. Constancy in danger, if it must be so called, the contempt of death, and patience in misfortunes, may ofttimes be found in men for want of well judging of such accidents, and not apprehending them for such as they are. Want of apprehension and stupidity sometimes counterfeit virtuous effects: as I have often seen it happen, that men have been commended for what really merited blame. An Italian lord once said this, in my presence, to the disadvantage of his own nation: that the subtlety of the Italians, and the vivacity of their conceptions were so great, and they foresaw the dangers and accidents that might befall them so far off, that it was not to be thought strange, if they were often, in war, observed to provide for their safety, even before they had discovered the peril; that we French and the Spaniards, who were not so cunning, went on further, and that we must

be made to see and feel the danger before we would take the alarm; but that even then we could not stick to it. But the Germans and Swiss, more heavy and thick-skulled, had not the sense to look about them, even when the blows were falling about their ears. Peradventure, he only talked so for mirth's sake; and yet it is most certain that in war raw soldiers rush into danger with more precipitancy than after they have been well cudgelled:

> "Haud ignarus . . . . quantum nova gloria in armis,
> Et prædulce decus, primo certamine, possit." [1]

For this reason it is that, when we judge of a particular action, we are to consider the circumstances, and the whole man by whom it is performed, before we give it a name.

To instance in myself: I have sometimes known my friends call that prudence in me, which was merely fortune; and repute that courage and patience, which was judgment and opinion; and attribute to me one title for another, sometimes to my advantage and sometimes otherwise. As to the rest, I am so far from being arrived at the first and most perfect degree of excellence, where virtue is turned into habit, that even of the second I have made no great proofs. I have not been very solicitous to curb the desires by which I have been importuned. My virtue is a virtue, or rather an innocence, casual and accidental. If I had been born of a more irregular complexion, I am afraid I should have made scurvy work; for I never observed any great stability in my soul to resist passions, if they were never so little vehement: I have not the knack of nourishing quarrels and debates in my own bosom, and, consequently, owe myself no great thanks that I am free from several vices.

> "Si vitiis mediocribus et mea paucis
> Mendosa est natura, alioqui recta; velut si
> Egregio inspersos reprehendas corpore nævos:" [2]

I owe it rather to my fortune than my reason. She has

[1] "Not ignorant, how hope of glory excites the young soldier in the first essay of arms."—*Æneid*, xi. 154.

[2] "If my nature be chargeable only with slight and few vices, and I am otherwise of rectitude, the venial faults will be no more than moles on a fair body."—HORATIUS, *Sat.* i. 6, 65.

caused me to be descended of a race famous for integrity and of a very good father; I know not whether or no he has infused into me part of his humours, or whether domestic examples and the good education of my infancy have insensibly assisted in the work, or, if I was otherwise born so;

> "Seu Libra, seu me Scorpius adspicit
> Formidolosus, pars violentior,
> Natalis horæ, seu tyrannus
> Hesperiæ Capricornus undæ:"[1]

but so it is, that I have naturally a horror for most vices. The answer of Antisthenes to him who asked him, which was the best apprenticeship "to unlearn evil," seems to point at this. I have them in horror, I say, with a detestation so natural, and so much my own, that the same instinct and impression I brought of them with me from my nurse, I yet retain, and no temptation whatever has had the power to make me alter it. Not so much as my own discourses, which in some things lashing out of the common road might seem easily to license me to actions that my natural inclination makes me hate. I will say a prodigious thing, but I will say it however: I find myself in many things more under reputation by my manners than by my opinion, and my concupiscence less debauched than my reason. Aristippus instituted opinions so bold in favour of pleasure and riches as set all the philosophers against him: but as to his manners, Dionysius the tyrant, having presented three beautiful women before him, to take his choice; he made answer, that he would choose them all, and that Paris got himself into trouble for having preferred one before the other two: but, having taken them home to his house, he sent them back untouched. His servant finding himself overladen upon the way, with the money he carried after him, he ordered him to pour out and throw away that which troubled him. And Epicurus, whose doctrines were so irreligious and effeminate, was in his life very laborious and devout; he wrote to a friend of his that he lived only upon biscuit and water, entreating him to send him a little

[1] "Whether I was born under the Balance, or under Scorpio, formidable at the natal hour, or under Capricorn, ruler of the occidental seas."—HORACE, *Od.* ii. 117.

cheese, to lie by him against he had a mind to make a feast.[1] Must it be true, that to be a perfect good man, we must be so by an occult, natural, and universal propriety, without law, reason, or example? The debauches wherein I have been engaged, have not been, I thank God, of the worst sort, and I have condemned them in myself, for my judgment was never infected by them; on the contrary, I accuse them more severely in myself than in any other; but that is all, for, as to the rest, I oppose too little resistance and suffer myself to incline too much to the other side of the balance, excepting that I moderate them, and prevent them from mixing with other vices, which, for the most part will cling together, if a man have not a care. I have contracted and curtailed mine, to make them as single and as simple as I can:

"Nec ultra
Errorem foveo."[2]

For as to the opinion of the Stoics, who say, "That the wise man when he works, works by all the virtues together, though one be most apparent, according to the nature of the action;" and herein the similitude of a human body might serve them somewhat, for the action of anger cannot work unless all the humours assist it, though choler predominate; —if they will thence draw a like consequence, that when the wicked man does wickedly, he does it by all the vices together, I do not believe it to be so, or else I understand them not, for I by effect find the contrary. These are sharp, unsubstantial subtleties, with which philosophy sometimes amuses itself. I follow some vices, but I fly others as much as a saint would do. The Peripatetics also disown this indissoluble connection; and Aristotle is of opinion that a prudent and just man may be intemperate and inconsistent. Socrates confessed to some who had discovered a certain inclination to vice in his physiognomy, that it was, in truth, his natural propension, but that he had by discipline corrected it.[3] And such as were familiar with the philosopher Stilpo said, that being born with

[1] Diogenes Laertius, x. 11.
[2] "Not carry wrong further."—JUVENAL, viii. 164.
[3] Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., iv. 17.

addiction to wine and women, he had by study rendered himself very abstinent both from the one and the other.[1]

What I have in me of good, I have, quite contrary, by the chance of my birth; and hold it not either by law, precept, or any other instruction: the innocence that is in me is a simple one; little vigour and no art. Amongst other vices, I mortally hate cruelty, both by nature and judgment, as the very extreme of all vices: nay, with so much tenderness that I cannot see a chicken's neck pulled off, without trouble, and cannot, without impatience, endure the cry of a hare in my dog's teeth, though the chase be a violent pleasure. Such as have sensuality to encounter, freely make use of this argument, to show that it is altogether "vicious and unreasonable; that when it is at the height, it masters us to that degree that a man's reason can have no access,"[2] and instance our own experience in the act of love,

> "Quum jam præsagit gaudia corpus,
> Atque in eo est Venus, ut muliebria conserat arva."[3]

wherein they conceive that the pleasure so transports us, that our reason cannot perform its office, whilst we are in such ecstacy and rapture. I know very well it may be otherwise, and that a man may sometimes, if he will, gain this point over himself to sway his soul, even in the critical moment, to think of something else; but then he must ply it to that bent. I know that a man may triumph over the utmost effort of this pleasure: I have experienced it in myself, and have not found Venus so imperious a goddess, as many, and much more virtuous men than I, declare. I do not consider it a miracle, as the Queen of Navarre does in one of the tales of her Heptameron (which is a very pretty book of that kind) nor for a thing of extreme difficulty, to pass whole nights, where a man has all the convenience and liberty he can desire, with a long-coveted mistress, and yet be true to the pledge first given to satisfy himself with kisses and suchlike endearments, without pressing any further. I conceive that the example of the pleasure of the chase would be more proper; wherein though the pleasure

[1] Cicero, De Fato, c. 5. [2] Idem, De Senect., c. 12.
[3] Lucretius, iv. 1099. The sense is in the preceding passage of the text.

be less, there is the higher excitement of unexpected joy, giving no time for the reason, taken by surprise, to prepare itself for the encounter, when after a long quest the beast starts up on a sudden in a place where, peradventure, we least expected it; the shock and the ardour of the shouts and cries of the hunters so strike us, that it would be hard for those who love this lesser chase, to turn their thoughts, upon the instant, another way; and the poets make Diana triumph over the torch and shafts of Cupid:

> "Quis non malarum, quas amor curas habet,
> Hæc inter obliviscitur?"[1]

To return to what I was saying before, I am tenderly compassionate of others' afflictions, and should readily cry for company, if, upon any occasion whatever, I could cry at all. Nothing tempts my tears, but tears, and not only those that are real and true, but whatever they are, feigned or painted. I do not much lament the dead, and should envy them rather; but I very much lament the dying. The savages do not so much offend me, in roasting and eating the bodies of the dead, as they do who torment and persecute the living. Nay, I cannot look so much as upon the ordinary executions of justice, how reasonable soever, with a steady eye. Some one having to give testimony of Julius Cæsar's clemency; "he was," says he, "mild in his revenges. Having compelled the pirates to yield by whom he had before been taken prisoner and put to ransom; forasmuch as he had threatened them with the cross, he indeed condemned them to it, but it was after they had been first strangled. He punished his secretary Philemon, who had attempted to poison him, with no greater severity than mere death." Without naming that Latin author,[2] who thus dares to allege as a testimony of mercy the killing only of those by whom we have been offended, it is easy to guess that he was struck with the horrid and inhuman examples of cruelty practised by the Roman tyrants.

For my part, even in justice itself, all that exceeds a simple death appears to me pure cruelty; especially in us

[1] "Who, amongst such delights, would not remove out of his thoughts the anxious cares of love?"—HORACE, *Epod.*, ii. 37.

[2] Suetonius, Life of Cæsar, c. 74.

who ought, having regard to their souls, to dismiss them in a good and calm condition; which cannot be, when we have agitated them by insufferable torments. Not long since, a soldier who was a prisoner, perceiving from a tower where he was shut up, that the people began to assemble to the place of execution, and that the carpenters were busy erecting a scaffold, he presently concluded that the preparation was for him; and therefore entered into a resolution to kill himself, but could find no instrument to assist him in his design except an old rusty cart-nail that fortune presented to him; with this he first gave himself two great wounds about his throat, but finding these would not do, he presently afterwards gave himself a third in the belly, where he left the nail sticking up to the head. The first of his keepers who came in found him in this condition: yet alive, but sunk down and exhausted by his wounds. To make use of time, therefore, before he should die, they made haste to read his sentence; which having done, and he hearing that he was only condemned to be beheaded, he seemed to take new courage, accepted wine which he had before refused, and thanked his judges for the unhoped-for mildness of their sentence; saying, that he had taken a resolution to despatch himself for fear of a more severe and insupportable death, having entertained an opinion, by the preparations he had seen in the place, that they were resolved to torment him with some horrible execution, and seemed to be delivered from death, in having it changed from what he apprehended.

I should advise that those examples of severity, by which 'tis designed to retain the people in their duty, might be exercised upon the dead bodies of criminals; for to see them deprived of sepulture, to see them boiled and divided into quarters, would almost work as much upon the vulgar, as the pain they make the living endure; though that in effect be little or nothing, as God himself says, "Who kill the body, and, after that, have no more that they can do;"[1] and the poets singularly dwell upon the horrors of this picture, as something worse than death:

[1] Luke xii. 4.

"Heu! reliquias semiussi regis, denudatis ossibus,
Per terram sanie delibutas fœde divexarier."[1]

I happened to come by one day, accidentally, at Rome, just as they were upon executing Catena, a notorious robber: he was strangled without any emotion of the spectators, but when they came to cut him in quarters, the hangman gave not a blow that the people did not follow with a doleful cry and exclamation, as if every one had lent his sense of feeling to the miserable carcase. Those inhuman excesses ought to be exercised upon the bark, and not upon the quick. Artaxerxes, in almost a like case, moderated the severity of the ancient laws of Persia, ordaining that the nobility who had committed a fault, instead of being whipped, as they were used to be, should be stripped only and their clothes whipped for them; and that whereas they were wont to tear off their hair, they should only take off their high-crowned tiara.[2] The so devout Egyptians thought they sufficiently satisfied the divine justice by sacrificing hogs in effigy and representation; a bold invention to pay God, so essential a substance, in picture only and in show.

I live in a time wherein we abound in incredible examples of this vice, through the licence of our civil wars; and we see nothing in ancient histories more extreme than what we have proof of every day, but I cannot, any the more, get used to it. I could hardly persuade myself, before I saw it with my eyes, that there could be found souls so cruel and fell, who, for the sole pleasure of murder, would commit it; would hack and lop off the limbs of others; sharpen their wits to invent unusual torments and new kinds of death, without hatred, without profit, and for no other end but only to enjoy the pleasant spectacle of the gestures and motions, the lamentable groans and cries of a man dying in anguish. For this is the utmost point to which cruelty can arrive: "Ut homo hominem, non iratus, non timens, tantum spectaturus, occidat."[3] For my own

[1] "Alas! that the half-burnt remains of these kings, and their bared bones, should be shamefully dragged through the dirt."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, i. 44.

[2] Plutarch, Notable Sayings of the Ancient Kings.

[3] "That a man should kill a man without being angry, or

part, I cannot without grief see so much as an innocent beast pursued and killed that has no defence, and from which we have received no offence at all; and that which frequently happens, that the stag we hunt, finding himself weak and out of breath, and seeing no other remedy, surrenders himself to us who pursue him, imploring mercy by his tears,

"Questuque cruentus,
Atque imploranti similis,"[1]

has ever been to me a very unpleasing sight; and I hardly ever take a beast alive that I do not presently turn out again. Pythagoras bought them of fishermen and fowlers to do the same:

"Primoque a cæde ferarum,
Incaluisse puto maculatum sanguine ferrum."[2]

Those natures that are sanguinary towards beasts discover a natural propension to cruelty. After they had accustomed themselves at Rome to spectacles of the slaughter of animals, they proceeded to those of the slaughter of men, to the gladiators. Nature has herself, I fear, imprinted in man a kind of instinct to inhumanity; nobody takes pleasure in seeing beasts play with and caress one another, but every one is delighted with seeing them dismember, and tear one another to pieces. And that I may not be laughed at for the sympathy I have with them, theology itself enjoins us some favour in their behalf; and considering that one and the same master has lodged us together in this palace for his service, and that they, as well as we, are of his family, it has reason to enjoin us some affection and regard to them. Pythagoras borrowed the metempsychosis from the Egyptians; but it has since been received by several nations, and particularly by our Druids:

without fear, only for the pleasure of the spectacle."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 90.

[1] "Who, bleeding, by his tears seems to crave mercy."—*Æneid*, vii. 501.

[2] "I think 'twas slaughter of wild beasts that first stained the steel of man with blood."—OVID, *Met.*, xv. 106.

"Morte carent animæ; semperque, priore relicta
Sede, novis domibus vivunt, habitantque receptæ."[1]

The religion of our ancient Gauls maintained that souls, being eternal, never ceased to remove and shift their places from one body to another; mixing moreover with this fancy some consideration of divine justice; for according to the deportments of the soul, whilst it had been in Alexander, they said that God assigned it another body to inhabit, more or less painful, and proper for its condition:

"Muta ferarum
Cogit vincla pati; truculentos ingerit ursis,
Prædonesque lupis; fallaces vulpibus addit:
Atque ubi per varios annos, per mille figuras
Egit, Lethæo purgatos flumine, tandem
Rursus ad humanæ revocat primordia formæ:"[2]

if it had been valiant, he lodged it in the body of a lion; if voluptuous, in that of a hog; if timorous, in that of a hart or hare; if malicious, in that of a fox, and so of the rest, till having purified it by this chastisement, it again entered into the body of some other man:

"Ipse ego, nam memini, Trojani tempore belli
Panthoïdes Euphorbus eram."[3]

As to the relationship betwixt us and beasts, I do not much admit of it; nor of that which several nations, and those among the most ancient and most noble, have practised, who have not only received brutes into their society and companionship, but have given them a rank infinitely above themselves, esteeming them one while familiars and favourites of the gods, and having them in more than human reverence and respect; others acknow-

[1] "Souls never die, but, having left one seat, are received into new houses."—OVID, *Met.*, xv. 158.

[2] "He made them wear the silent chains of brutes, the blood-thirsty souls he enclosed in bears; the thieves in wolves; the sly in foxes; where after having, through successive years and a thousand forms, finished these careers, purging them well in Lethe's flood, at last he replaces them in human bodies."—CLAUDIAN, *Contra Ruf.*, ii. 482.

[3] "For I myself remember that in the days of the Trojan war, I was Euphorbus, son of Pantheus."—OVID, *Met.*, xv. 160; and see DIOGENES LAERTIUS, *Life of Pythagoras.*

ledged no other god or divinity than they. "Belluæ à barbaris propter beneficium consecratæ:"[1]

"Crocodilon adorat
Pars hæc; illa pavet saturam serpentibus ibin:
Effigies sacri hic nitet aurea cercopitheci;
Hic piscem fluminis, illic
Oppida tota canem venerantur."[2]

And the very interpretation that Plutarch[3] gives to this error, which is very well conceived, is advantageous to them: for he says that it was not the cat or the ox, for example, that the Egyptians adored: but that they, in those beasts, adored some image of the divine faculties; in this, patience and utility; in that vivacity, or, as with our neighbours the Burgundians and all the Germans, impatience to see themselves shut up; by which they represented liberty, which they loved and adored above all other godlike attributes, and so of the rest. But when, amongst the more moderate opinions, I meet with arguments that endeavour to demonstrate the near resemblance betwixt us and animals, how large a share they have in our greatest privileges, and with how much probability they compare us together, truly I abate a great deal of our presumption, and willingly resign that imaginary sovereignty that is attributed to us over other creatures.

But supposing all this were not true, there is, nevertheless, a certain respect, a general duty of humanity, not only to beasts that have life and sense, but even to trees and plants. We owe justice to men, and graciousness and benignity to other creatures that are capable of it; there is a certain commerce and mutual obligation betwixt them and us. Nor shall I be afraid to confess the tenderness of my nature so childish, that I cannot well refuse to play with my dog, when he the most unseasonably importunes me so to do. The Turks have alms and hospitals for beasts. The

[1] "The barbarians consecrated beasts, out of opinion of some benefit received by them."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, i. 36.

[2] "This place adores the crocodile; another dreads the ibis, feeder on serpents; here you may behold the statue of a monkey shining in gold: here men venerate a river fish; there whole towns worship a dog."—JUVENAL, xv. 2.

[3] On Isis and Osiris, c. 39

Romans had public care to the nourishment of geese, by whose vigilance their Capitol had been preserved. The Athenians made a decree that the mules and moyls which had served at the building of the temple called Hecatompedon should be free and suffered to pasture at their own choice, without hindrance.[1] The Agrigentines[2] had a common use solemnly to inter the beasts they had a kindness for, as horses of some rare quality, dogs, and useful birds, and even those that had only been kept to divert their children; and the magnificence that was ordinary with them in all other things, also particularly appeared in the sumptuosity and numbers of monuments erected to this end, and which remained in their beauty several ages after. The Egyptians[3] buried wolves, bears, crocodiles, dogs, and cats in sacred places, embalmed their bodies, and put on mourning at their death. Cimon gave an honourable sepulture to the mares with which he had three times gained the prize of the course at the Olympic Games.[4] The ancient Xantippus caused his dog to be interred on an eminence near the sea, which has ever since retained the name,[5] and Plutarch says, that he had a scruple about selling for a small profit to the slaughterer an ox that had been long in his service.[6]

CHAPTER XII.

APOLOGY FOR RAIMOND DE SEBONDE.

LEARNING is, in truth, a very useful and a very considerable quality; such as despise it merely discover their own folly: but yet I do not prize it at the excessive rate some others do; as Herillus the philosopher for one, who therein places the sovereign good, and maintained that it was merely in her to render us wise and contented,[7] which I do not

[1] Plutarch, Life of Cato the Censor, c. 3.
[2] Diogenes Siculus, xiii. 17.
[3] Idem, ibid.
[4] Herodotus, book ii.
[5] Plutarch, *ut supra*.
[6] Idem, ibid.
[7] Diogenes Laertius, vii. 165.

believe; no more than I do what others have said, that learning is the mother of all virtue, and that all vice proceeds from ignorance. If this be true, it is subject to a very long interpretation. My house has long been open to men of knowledge and is very well known to them; for my father, who governed it fifty years and more, inflamed with the new ardour with which Francis I. embraced letters and brought them into esteem, with great diligence and expense hunted after the acquaintance of learned men, receiving them at his house as persons sacred, and who had some particular inspiration of divine wisdom; collecting their sayings and sentences as so many oracles, and with so much the greater reverence and religion, as he was the less able to judge; for he had no knowledge of letters, no more than his predecessors. For my part I love them well, but I do not adore them. Amongst the rest, Peter Bunel, a man of great reputation for knowledge in his time, having, with others of his sort, stayed some days at Montaigne in my father's company, he presented him, at his departure, with a book intituled "Theologia naturalis; sive Liber creaturarum magistri Raimondi de Sebonde;[1] and knowing that the Italian and Spanish tongues were familiar to my father, and this book being written in Spanish worked up with Latin terminations, he hoped that with little help he might be able to make it turn to account, and therefore recommended it to him as a very useful piece and proper for the time wherein he gave it to him, which was when the novel doctrines of Martin Luther began to be in vogue, and in many places to stagger our ancient belief: wherein he was very well advised, justly, in his own reason, foreseeing that the beginning of this distemper would easily run into an execrable atheism; for the vulgar not having the faculty of judging of things themselves, suffering themselves to be carried away by fortune and appearance, after having once been inspired with the boldness to despise and question those opinions they had before had in extremest reverence, such as are those wherein their salvation is con-

[1] "Raymond de Sebonde, or Sebon, or Sabaude, or Sebeyde," as he was variously named, was a professor of medicine, philosophy, and theology at Toulouse, about 1430 The work was first printed at Daventer about 1484.

cerned, and that some of the articles of their religion have been brought into doubt and dispute, they very soon throw all other parts of their belief into the same uncertainty, they having in them no other authority or foundation than the others that had already been discomposed, and shake off all the impressions they had received from the authority of the laws or the reverence of ancient custom as a tyrannical yoke,

"Nam cupide conculcatur nimis ante metutum:"[1]

resolving to admit nothing for the future to which they had not first interposed their own decrees, and given their special consent.

Now, my father, a little before his death, having accidentally found this book under a heap of other neglected papers, commanded me to translate it for him into French. It is all very well to translate such authors as this, where is little but the matter itself to express; but those wherein ornament of language and elegance of style are a main endeavour, are dangerous to attempt, especially when a man is to turn them into a weaker idiom. It was a strange and a new occupation for me, but having by chance, at that time, little else to do, and not being able to resist the command of the best father that ever was, I did it as well as I could; and he was so well pleased with it as to order it to be printed, which after his death, was done.[2] I found the imaginations of this author exceedingly fine, the contexture of his work well followed up, and his design full of piety. And because many people take a delight in reading it, and particularly the ladies, to whom we owe the most service, I have often been called upon to assist them to clear the book of two principal objections. His design is hardy and bold; for he undertakes, by human and natural reasons, to establish and make good against the atheists all the articles of the Christian religion: wherein, to speak the truth, he is so firm and so successful that I do not think it possible to do better upon that subject, and believe that he has been

[1] "For people eagerly spurn that of which they were before most in awe."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1139.

[2] In 1569; it is dedicated "A Monsieur de Montagne, le Père."

equalled by none. This work seeming to me to be too beautiful and too rich for an author whose name is so little known, and of whom all that we know is that he was a Spaniard, who professed physic at Toulouse about two hundred years ago, I inquired of Adrian Turnebus, who knew all things, what he thought of the book. He made answer, that he fancied it was some abstract drawn from St. Thomas Aquinas, for that, in truth, his mind, full of infinite learning and admirable subtlety, was alone capable of those thoughts. Be this as it may, and whoever was the author and inventor (and 'tis not reasonable, without greater occasion, to deprive Sebonde of that title), he was a man of great sufficiency and most admirable parts.

The first thing they reprehend in his work is, that Christians are to blame to repose upon human reasons their belief, which is only conceived by faith and the particular inspiration of divine grace. In which objection there appears to be something of over-zeal of piety, and therefore we are to endeavour to satisfy those who put it forth with the greater mildness and respect. This were a task more proper for a man well read in divinity than for me, who know nothing of it; nevertheless, I conceive that in a thing so divine, so high, and so far transcending all human intelligence as is this Truth with which it has pleased the goodness of Almighty God to enlighten us, it is very necessary that He should, moreover, lend us His assistance, by extraordinary privilege and favour, to conceive and imprint it in our understandings; and I do not believe that means purely human are, in any sort, capable of doing it: for, if they were, so many rare and excellent souls, so abundantly furnished with natural power, in former ages, had not failed, by their reason, to arrive at this knowledge. 'Tis faith alone that vividly and certainly comprehends the deep mysteries of our religion; but withal, I do not say that it is not a brave and a very laudable attempt to accommodate the natural and human capabilities that God has endowed us with to the service of our faith. It is not to be doubted but that it is the most noble use we can put them to, and that there is no design or occupation more worthy of a Christian man than to make it the aim and end of all his thoughts and studies to embellish, extend, and amplify

the truth of his belief. We do not satisfy ourselves with serving God with our souls and understanding only; we, moreover, owe and render Him a corporal reverence, and apply our limbs, motions, and external things to do Him honour; we must here do the same, and accompany our faith with all the reason we have, but always with this reservation, not to fancy that it is upon us that it depends, nor that our arguments and endeavours can arrive at so supernatural and divine a knowledge. If it enter not into us by an extraordinary infusion; if it only enter, not only by arguments of reason, but, moreover, by human ways, it is not in us in its true dignity and splendour, and yet I am afraid we only have it by this way. If we held upon God by the mediation of a lively faith; if we held upon God by Him and not by us: if we had a divine basis and foundation, human accidents would not have the power to shake us as they do; our fortress would not surrender to so weak a battery; the love of novelty, the constraint of princes, the success of one party, the rash and fortuitous change of our opinions, would not have the power to stagger and alter our belief. We should not then leave it to the mercy of every novel argument, nor abandon it to the persuasions of all the rhetoric in the world; we should withstand the fury of these waves with an unmoved and unyielding constancy:

> "Illisos fluctus rupes ut vasta refundit,
> Et varias circum latrantes dissipat undas
> Mole sua."[1]

If we were but touched with this ray of divinity, it would appear throughout; not only our words, but our works also, would carry its brightness and lustre; whatever proceeded from us would be seen illuminated with this noble light. We ought to be ashamed that in all the human sects there never was sectary, what difficulty and strange novelty soever his doctrine imposed upon him, who did not, in some measure, conform his life and deportment to it; whereas so divine and heavenly an institution as ours only distinguishes Christians by the name. Will you see the

[1] "As a vast rock repels the rolling waves, and dissipates the waters raging about her by its mass." Verses by an anonymous author in the praise of Ronsard, imitating the Æneid, vii. 587.

proof of this? compare our manners with those of a Mohammedan or Pagan; you will still find that we fall very short, whereas, having regard to the advantage of our religion, we ought to shine in excellence at an extreme, an incomparable distance, and it should be said of us, "Are they so just, so charitable, so good? Then they are Christians." All other signs are common to all religions; hope, trust, events, ceremonies, penance, martyrs; the peculiar mark of our Truth ought to be our virtue, as it is also the most heavenly and difficult mark, and the most worthy product of Truth. And therefore our good St. Louis was in the right, who when the king of the Tartars, who had become a Christian, designed to visit Lyons to kiss the Pope's feet, and there to be an eye-witness of the sanctity he hoped to find in our manners, immediately diverted him from his purpose, for fear lest our disorderly way of living should, on the contrary, put him out of conceit with so holy a belief.[1] Yet it happened quite otherwise, since, to him who going to Rome to the same end, and there seeing the dissoluteness of the prelates and people of that time, settled himself all the more firmly in our religion, considering how great the force and divinity of it must necessarily be that could maintain its dignity and splendour amongst so much corruption and in so vicious hands. If we had but one single grain of faith we should move mountains from their places, says the sacred Word;[2] our actions would then be directed and accompanied by the divinity, would not be merely human; they would have in them something of miraculous as well as our belief: "Brevis est institutio vitæ honestæ beatæque, si credas."[3] Some impose upon the world that they believe that which they do not believe; others, more in number, make themselves believe that they believe, not being able to penetrate into what it is to believe; and we think it strange if, in the civil wars which at this time disorder our state, we see events float and vary after a common and ordinary manner, which is because we bring nothing there but our own. The

[1] Joinville, c. 19. [2] Matthew xvii. 19.

[3] "Believe, and the way to virtuous and happy life is a short one."—QUINTILIAN, xii. 11.

justice which is in one of the parties, is only there for ornament and cloak; it is indeed alleged, but 'tis not there received, settled, or espoused: it is there as in the mouth of an advocate, not as in the heart and affection of the party. God owes His extraordinary assistance to faith and religion, not to our passions: men are the conductors and herein make use for their own purposes of religion; it ought to be quite contrary. Observe if it be not by our own hands that we guide and train it, and draw it, like wax, into so many figures, at variance with a rule in itself so direct and firm. When has this been more manifest than in France in our days? They who have taken it on the left hand, they who have taken it on the right, they who call it black, they who call it white, alike employ it to their violent and ambitious designs, and conduct it with a progress so conform in riot and injustice that they render the diversity they pretend in their opinions, in a thing whereon the conduct and rule of our life depends, doubtful and hard to believe. Could one see manners more exactly the same, more uniform, issue from the same school and discipline? Do but observe with what horrid impudence we toss divine arguments to and fro, and how irreligiously we have rejected and retaken them, according as fortune has shifted our places in these intestine storms. This so solemn proposition, "Whether it be lawful for a subject to rebel and take up arms against his prince for the defence of his religion:" do you remember in whose mouths last year, the affirmative of it was the prop of one party; of what other party the negative was the pillar? and hearken now from what quarter come the voice and instruction of both the one and the other; and if arms make less noise and rattle for this cause than for that. We condemn those to the fire who say that Truth must be made to bear the yoke of our necessity; and how much worse does France than say it? Let us confess the truth; whoever should draw out from the army, aye, from that raised by the king's authority, those who take up arms out of pure zeal and affection to religion, and also those who only do it to protect the laws of their country, or for the service of their prince, would hardly be able, out of all these put together, to muster one complete company. Whence does it proceed

that there are so few to be found who have maintained the same will and the same progress in our public movements, and that we see them one while go but a foot pace, and another run full speed, and the same men, one while damaging our affairs by their violent heat and acrimony, and another while by their coldness, indifference and slowness, but that they are impelled by special and casual considerations, according to the diversity of circumstances?

I evidently perceive that we do not willingly afford to devotion any other offices but those that best suit with our own passions; there is no hostility so admirable as the Christian; our zeal performs wonders when it seconds our inclinations to hatred, cruelty, ambition, avarice, detraction, rebellion: but moved against the hair towards goodness, benignity, moderation, unless by miracle some rare and virtuous disposition prompt us to it, we stir neither hand nor foot. Our religion is intended to extirpate vices; whereas it screens, nourishes, incites them. We must not mock God. If we did believe in Him, I do not say by faith, but with a simple belief, that is to say (and I speak it to our great shame), if we did believe Him, or knew Him as any other history, or as one of our companions, we should love Him above all other things, for the infinite goodness and beauty that shine in Him: at least, He would go equal in our affections with riches, pleasures, glory, and our friends. The best of us is not so much afraid to offend Him, as he is afraid to offend his neighbour, his kinsman, his master. Is there any so weak understanding that having, on one side, the object of one of our vicious pleasures, and on the other, in equal knowledge and persuasion, the state of an immortal glory, would exchange the one against the other? And yet we ofttimes renounce this out of pure contempt: for what tempts us to blaspheme if not, peradventure, the very desire to offend? The philosopher Antisthenes, as the priest was initiating him in the mysteries of Orpheus, telling him that those who professed themselves of that religion were certain to receive perfect and eternal felicity after death; "If thou believest that," answered he, "why dost not thou die thyself?"[1]

[1] Diogenes Laertius, vi. 4.

Diogenes, more rudely, according to his manner, and more remote from our purpose, to the priest that in like manner preached to him to become of his religion that he might obtain the happiness of the other world: "What," said he, "thou wouldst have me believe that Agesilaus and Epaminondas, those so great men, shall be miserable, and that thou, who art but a calf, and canst do nothing to purpose, shalt be happy because thou art a priest?"[1] Did we receive these great promises of eternal beatitude with the same reverence and respect that we do a philosophical lecture, we should not have death in so great horror:

> "Non jam se moriens dissolvi conquereretur;
> Sed magis ire foras, vestemque relinquere, et anguis
> Gauderet, prælonga senex aut cornua cervus."[2]

"I am willing to be dissolved," we should say, "and to be with Jesus Christ."[3] The force of Plato's arguments concerning the immortality of the soul sent some of his disciples to untimely graves, that they might the sooner enjoy the things he had made them hope for.

All this is a most evident sign that we only receive our religion after our own fashion, by our own hands, and no otherwise than other religions are received. Either we are in the country where it is in practice, or we bear a reverence to its antiquity, or to the authority of the men who have maintained it, or we fear the menaces it fulminates against unbelievers, or are allured by its promises. These considerations ought, 'tis true, to be applied to our belief, but as subsidiaries only, for they are human obligations; another religion, other testimonies, the like promises and threats, might in the same way imprint a quite contrary belief. We are Christians by the same title that we are Perigordins or Germans. And what Plato says,[4] that there are few men so obstinate in their atheism whom a pressing danger will not reduce to an acknowledgment of

[1] Diogenes Laertius, vi. 39.

[2] "We should not, then, dying, repine to be dissolved, but rather step out of doors cheerfully, and, with the snake, be glad to cast our old slough; or, with the old stag, to get clear of the old horns." LUCRETIUS, iii. 612.

[3] St. Paul, Philippians i. 23.

[4] Laws, x.

the divine power, does not concern a true Christian; 'tis for mortal and human religions to be received by human recommendation. What kind of faith can we expect that should be, that cowardice and feebleness of heart plant and establish in us? A pleasant faith, that does not believe what it believes, but for want of courage to disbelieve it. Can a vicious passion, such as inconstancy and astonishment, cause any regular product in our souls? They are confident in their own judgment, says he,[1] that what is said of hell and future torments is all feigned: but the occasion of making the experiment presenting itself when old age or diseases bring them to the brink of the grave, the terror of death by the horror of their future condition, inspires them with a new belief. And by reason that such impressions render them timorous, he forbids in his laws all such threatening doctrines, and all persuasion that anything of ill can befal a man from the gods, excepting for his greater good, when they happen to him, and for a medicinal effect. They say of Bion that, infected with the atheism of Theodorus, he had long had religious men in great scorn and contempt, but that, death surprising him, he gave himself up to the most extreme superstition; as if the gods withdrew and returned according to the necessities of Bion.[2] Plato and these examples would conclude that we are brought to a belief of God either by reason or by force. Atheism being a proposition, unnatural and monstrous, difficult also and very hard to sink into human understanding, how arrogant and irregular soever that may be, there are enough seen, out of vanity and pride, to be the authors of extraordinary and reforming opinions, and to outwardly affect their profession, who, if they are such fools, have nevertheless not had the power to plant them in their conscience; they will not fail to lift up their hands towards heaven if you give them a good thrust with a sword in the breast; and when fear or sickness has abated and deadened the licentious fervour of this giddy humour, they will readily return, and very discreetly suffer themselves to be reconciled to the public faith and examples. A doctrine seriously digested

[1] Plato, Republic.

[2] Sebonde, Theol. Nat., c. 24, after Diogenes Laertius, Life of Bion.

is one thing; quite another thing are those superficial impressions which, springing from the disorder of an unhinged understanding, float at random and uncertainly in the fancy. Miserable and senseless men, who strive to be worse than they can!

The error of paganism and the ignorance of our sacred truth made the great soul of Plato, but great only in human greatness, fall yet into this other vicinous mistake, "that children and old men are most susceptible of religion," as if it sprang and derived its reputation from our weakness. The knot that ought to bind the judgment and the will, that ought to restrain the soul and join it to the creator, should be a knot that derives its foldings and strength, not from our considerations, from our reasons and passions, but from a divine and supernatural constraint, having but one form, one face, and one lustre, which is the authority of God and His divine grace. Now, our heart and soul being governed and commanded by faith, 'tis but reason that they should muster all our other faculties, for as much as they are able to perform, to the service and assistance of their design. Neither is it to be imagined that all this machine has not some marks imprinted upon it by the hand of the mighty architect, and that there is not in the things of this world, some image, that in some measure resembles the workman who has built and formed them. He has in His stupendous works left the character of His divinity, and 'tis our own weakness only that hinders us from discerning it. 'Tis what He Himself is pleased to tell us, that He manifests His invisible operations to us, by those that are visible; Sebonde applied himself to this laudable study, and demonstrates to us that there is not any part or member of the world that disclaims or derogates from its maker.[1] It were to do a wrong to the divine goodness, did not the universe consent to our belief; the heavens, the earth, the elements, our bodies, and our souls, all these concur to this, if we can but find out the way to use them. They instruct us if we are capable of instruction; for this world is a most sacred temple, into which man is introduced, there to contemplate statues, not the works of a mortal hand, but such as

[1] Theol. Nat., c. 24.

the divine purpose has made the objects of sense, the sun, the stars, the waters, and the earth, to represent those that are intelligible to us. "The invisible things of God," says St. Paul,[1] "from the creation of the world, His eternal power and Godhead," are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.

> "Atque adeo faciem cœli non invidet orbi
> Ipse Deus, vultusque suos, corpusque recludit
> Semper volvendo; seque ipsum inculcat, et offert;
> Ut bene cognosci possit, doceatque videndo
> Qualis eat, doceatque suas attendere leges."[2]

Now our human reasons and discourses are but sterile and undigested matter: the grace of God is its form; 'tis that which gives to it fashion and value. As the virtuous actions of Socrates and Cato remain vain and fruitless, for not having had the love and obedience of the true creator of all things for their end and object, and for not having known God, so is it with our imaginations and discourses; they have a kind of body, but it is an inform mass, without fashion and without light, if faith and God's grace be not added to it. Faith coming to tint and illustrate Sebonde's arguments, renders them firm and solid, so that they are capable of serving for direction and first guide to a learner to put him into the way of this knowledge: they, in some measure, form him to and render him capable of the grace of God, by means whereof he afterwards completes and perfects himself in the truth of belief. I know a man of authority, bred up to letters, who has confessed to me that he had been reclaimed from the errors of misbelief by Sebonde's arguments. And should they be stripped of this ornament and of the assistance and approbation of the faith, and be looked upon as mere human fancies only, to contend with those who are precipitated into the dreadful and horrible darkness of irreligion, they will even then be found as solid and firm, as any others of the same class

[1] Romans, i. 20.

[2] "And God Himself does not envy to men the seeing heaven's face; but ever revolving, He still renews its face and body to our view; and Himself so inculcates into our minds that we may well know Him, instructing us by seeing Him what He is, how He moves, and to obey His laws."—MANILIUS, iv. 907.

that can be opposed against them; so that we shall be ready to say to our opponents,

"Si melius quid habes, arcesse; vel imperium fer."[1]

Let them admit the force of our proofs, or let them show us others, and upon some other subject, better woven and of finer thread. I am, unawares, half engaged in the second objection, to which I proposed to make answer in the behalf of Sebonde.

Some say that his arguments are weak and unfit to make good what he proposes, and undertake with great ease to confute them. These are to be a little more roughly handled; for they are more dangerous and malicious than the first. Men willingly wrest the sayings of others to favour their own prejudicated opinions; to an atheist all writings tend to atheism; he corrupts the most innocent matter with his own venom. These have their judgments so prepossessed that they cannot relish Sebonde's reasons. As to the rest, they think we give them very fair play in putting them into the liberty of fighting our religion with weapons merely human, which, in its majesty full of authority and command, they durst not attack. The means that I use, and that I think most proper, to subdue this frenzy, is to crush and spurn under foot pride and human arrogance; to make them sensible of the inanity, vanity, and nothingness of man; to wrest the wretched arms of their reason out of their hands; to make them bow down and bite the ground, under the authority and reverence of the divine majesty. 'Tis to this alone that knowledge and wisdom appertain; 'tis this alone that can make a true estimate of itself, and from which we purloin whatever we value ourselves upon:

"Οὐ γὰρ ἐᾷ φρονέειν ὁ Θεὸς μέγα ἄλλον ἢ ἑαυτόν."[2]

Let us subdue this presumption, the first foundation of the tyranny of the evil spirit. "Deus superbis resistit: hu-

[1] "If you have anything better to say, say it; otherwise, yield."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 5, 6.

[2] "God will not permit that anyone shall be wiser than He."—HERODOTUS, vii. 10.

milibus autem dat gratiam."[1] Understanding is in all the gods, says Plato,[2] and not at all, or very little, in men. Now it is, in the meantime, a great consolation to a Christian man, to see our frail and mortal parts so fitly suited to our holy and divine faith, that when we employ them on the subjects of their own mortal and frail nature, they are not, even there, more equally or more firmly applied. Let us see, then, if man has in his power other reasons more forcible than those of Sebonde; that is to say, if it be in him to arrive at any certainty by argument and reason. For St. Augustin,[3] disputing against these people, has good cause to reproach them with injustice, in that they maintain the parts of our belief to be false that our reason cannot establish; and, to show that a great many things may be and may have been, of which our nature could not found the reason and causes, he proposes to them certain known and indubitable experiences wherein men confess they have no insight; and this he does, as all other things, with a close and ingenious inquisition. We must do more than this, and make them know that, to convict the weakness of their reason, there is no necessity of culling out rare examples: and that it is so defective and so blind, that there is no so clear facility clear enough for it: that to it the easy and the hard is all one; that all subjects equally, and nature in general, disclaims its authority, and rejects its mediation.

What does Truth mean, when she preaches to us to fly worldly philosophy,[4] when she so often inculcates to us,[5] that our wisdom is but folly in the sight of God; that the vainest of all vanities is man; that the man who presumes upon his wisdom, does not yet know what wisdom is; and that man, who is nothing, if he thinks himself to be anything, but seduces and deceives himself? These sentences of the Holy Ghost so clearly and vividly express that which I would maintain, that I should need no other proof against men who would, with all humility and obedience, submit to its authority; but these will be whipped at their own

[1] "God resists the proud; but gives grace to the humble."—1 *Peter*, v. 5.

[2] Timæus.

[3] De Civit. Dei, xxi. 5.

[4] St. Paul, Colossians, ii. 8.

[5] Idem, 1 Corinthians, iii. 19.

expense, and will not suffer a man to oppose their reason, but by itself.

Let us then now consider a man alone, without foreign assistance, armed only with his own proper arms, and unfurnished of the divine grace and wisdom, which is all his honour, strength, and the foundation of his being; let us see what certainty he has in this fine equipment. Let him make me understand by the force of his reason, upon what foundations he has built those great advantages he thinks he has over other creatures: what has made him believe, that this admirable movement of the celestial arch, the eternal light of those planets and stars that roll so proudly over his head, the fearful motions of that infinite ocean, were established, and continue so many ages, for his service and convenience? Can anything be imagined to be so ridiculous that this miserable and wretched creature, who is not so much as master of himself, but subject to the injuries of all things, should call himself master and emperor of the world, of which he has not power to know the least part, much less to command it. And this privilege which he attributes to himself, of being the only creature in this grand fabric that has the understanding to distinguish its beauty and its parts, the only one who can return thanks to the architect, and keep account of the revenues and disbursements of the world; who, I wonder, sealed for him this privilege? Let us see his letters-patent for this great and noble charge; were they granted in favour of the wise only? few people would be concerned in that: are fools and wicked persons worthy so extraordinary a favour, and, being the worst part of the world, to be preferred before the rest? Shall we believe this man? "quorum igitur causa qui dixerit effectum esse mundum? Eorum scilicet animantium, quæ ratione utuntur; hi sunt dii et homines, quibus profecto nihil est melius:"[1] we can never sufficiently decry the impudence of this conjunction. But, wretched creature, what has he in himself worthy of such an advantage? To consider the incorruptible existence of

[1] Balbus, the Stoic. "For whose sake shall we, therefore, conclude that the world was made? For theirs who have the use of reason: these are gods and men, than whom certainly nothing can be better."—CICERO, *De Nat. Deor.*, ii. 54.

the celestial bodies, their beauty, grandeur, their continual revolution, by so exact a rule;

"Quum suspicimus magni cœlestia mundi
Templa super, stellisque micantibus æthera fixum,
Et venit in mentem lunæ solisque viarum;"[1]

to consider the dominion and influence those bodies have, not only over our lives and fortunes,

"Facta etenim et vitas hominum suspendit ab astris,"[2]

but even over our inclinations, our thoughts and wills, which they govern, incite, and agitate at the mercy of their influences, as our reason finds and tells us;

"Speculataque longe,
Deprendit tacitis dominantia legibus astra,
Et totum alterna mundum ratione moveri,
Fatorumque vices certis discurrere signis;"[3]

to see that not merely a man, not merely a king, but that monarchies, empires, and all this lower world, follow the least dance of these celestial motions,

"Quantaque quam parvi faciant discrimina motus . . .
Tantum est hoc regnum, quod regibus imperat ipsis;"[4]

if our virtue, our vices, our knowledge and science, this very discourse we frame of the power of the stars, and this comparison betwixt them and us, proceed, as our reason supposes, by their means and favour;

"Furit alter amore,
Et pontum tranare potest, et vertere Trojam:
Alterius sors est scribendis legibus apta.

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[1] "When we behold the heavenly arch above, and the vast ether studded with glittering stars, and observe the courses of the sun and moon."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1203.

[2] "Men's lives and actions depend on the stars."—MANILIUS, iii. 58.

[3] "Contemplating the distant stars, he finds that they rule by silent laws; that the world is regulated by alternate causes, and that he can discern by certain signs the turns of destiny."—*Idem*, i. 60.

[4] "How great changes each little motion brings: so great is this kingdom that it governs kings themselves."—*Idem*, i. 55; iv. 93.

Ecce patrem nati perimunt, natosque parentes;
Mutuaque armati coeunt in vulnera fratres.
Non nostrum hoc bellum est; coguntur tanta movere,
Inque suas ferri pœnas, lacerandaque membra.
. . . . . .
Hoc quoque fatale est, sic ipsam expendere fatum."[1]

If we derive this little portion of reason we have from the bounty of heaven, how is it possible that reason should ever make us equal to it? how subject its essence and conditions to our knowledge? Whatever we see in these bodies astonishes us: "Quæ molitio, quæ ferramenta, qui vectes, quæ machinæ, qui ministri tanti operis fuerunt?"[2] Why do we deprive it of soul, of life, and reason? Have we discovered in it any immovable and insensible stupidity, we who have no commerce with the heavens but by obedience? Shall we say that we have discovered in no other creature but man the use of a reasonable soul! What! have we seen anything like the sun? does he cease to be, because we have seen nothing like him? and do his motions cease, because there are no others like them? If what we have not seen is not, our knowledge is wonderfully contracted: "Quæ sunt tantæ animi angustiæ?"[3] Are they not dreams of human vanity, to make the moon a celestial earth? there to fancy mountains and vales, as Anaxagoras did? there to fix habitations and human abodes, and plant colonies for our convenience, as Plato and Plutarch have done, and of our earth to make a beautiful and luminous star? "Inter cætera mortalitatis incommoda et hoc est, caligo mentium; nec tantum necessitas errandi, sed errorum amor."[4] "Cor-

[1] "One mad with love may cross the sea, and overturn Troy; another's fate is to write laws. Sons kill their fathers, fathers kill their sons; one armed brother wounds another armed brother. These wars are not ours; 'tis fate that compels men to punish themselves thus, and thus to lacerate themselves . . . 'Tis fate that compels me to write of fate."—MANILIUS, iv. 79, 118.

[2] "What contrivance, what tools, what levers, what engines, what workmen, were employed about so stupendous a work?"—CICERO, *De Nat. Deor.*, i. 8.

[3] "How narrow are our understandings?"—*Idem, ibid.*, i. 31.

[4] Amongst the other inconveniences of mortality this is one, to have the understanding clouded, and not only a necessity of erring, but a love of error."—SENECA, *De Ira*, ii. 9.

ruptibile corpus aggravat animam, et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem."[1]

Presumption is our natural and original disease. The most wretched and frail of all creatures is man, and withal the proudest. He feels and sees himself lodged here in the dirt and filth of the world, nailed and rivetted to the worst and deadest part of the universe, in the lowest story of the house, and most remote from the heavenly arch, with animals of the worst condition of the three,[2] and yet in his imagination will be placing himself above the circle of the moon, and bringing heaven under his feet. 'Tis by the vanity of the same imagination that he equals himself to God, attributes to himself divine qualities, withdraws and separates himself from the crowd of other creatures, cuts out the shares of animals his fellows and companions, and distributes to them portions of faculties and force as himself thinks fit. How does he know, by the strength of his understanding, the secret and internal motions of animals? and from what comparison betwixt them and us does he conclude the stupidity he attributes to them? When I play with my cat, who knows whether I do not make her more sport than she makes me? we mutually divert one another with our monkey tricks: if I have my hour to begin or to refuse, she also has hers. Plato, in his picture of the Golden Age under Saturn,[3] reckons, amongst the chief advantages that a man then had, his communication with beasts, of whom inquiring and informing himself, he knew the true qualities and differences of them all, by which he acquired a very perfect intelligence and prudence, and led his life far more happily than we could do: need we a better proof to condemn human impudence in the concern of beasts? This great author was of opinion that nature, for the most part, in the corporal form she gave them had only regard to the use of prognostics that were in his time thence derived. The defect that hinders communication betwixt them and us, why may it not be on our part as

[1] "The corruptible body stupefies the soul, and the earthly habitation dulls the faculties of the imagination."—ST. AUGUSTINE, *De Civit. Dei*, xii. 15 (Coste).

[2] Of those that creep on the earth, as distinguished from those that fly and swim.

[3] Politics.

well as theirs? 'Tis yet to determine where the fault lies that we understand not one another; for we understand them no more than they do us; by the same reason they may think us to be beasts as we think them. 'Tis no great wonder if we understand not them when we do not understand a Basque or the Troglodytes; and yet some have boasted that they understood these, as Apollonius Tyaneus, Melampus, Tiresias, Thales, and others. And seeing that, as cosmographers report, there are nations that receive a dog for their king,[1] they must of necessity be able to give some interpretation of his voice and motions. We must observe the parity betwixt us: we have some tolerable apprehension of their sense, and so have beasts of ours, and much in the same proportion. They caress us, they threaten us, and they beg of us, and we do the same to them. As to the rest, we manifestly discover that they have a full and absolute communication amongst themselves, and that they perfectly understand one another, not only those of the same, but of divers kinds.

> "Et mutæ pecudes, et denique secla ferarum
> Dissimiles suerunt voces variasque ciere,
> Cum metus aut dolor est, aut quum jam gaudia gliscunt."[2]

By one kind of barking the horse knows a dog is angry; of another sort of a bark he is not afraid. Even in the very beasts that have no voice at all, we easily conclude, from the social offices we observe amongst them, some other sort of communication; their very motions converse and consult:

> "Non alia longe ratione, atque ipsa videtur
> Protrahere ad gestum pueros infantia linguæ."[3]

And why not, as well as our mutes, dispute, contest, and tell stories by signs? of whom I have seen some, by practice, so supple and active in that way that, in earnest,

[1] Pliny, Nat. Hist., vi. 30.

[2] "The tame herds, and the wilder sorts of brutes, utter dissonant and various sounds, as fear, or pain, or pleasure influences them."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1058.

[3] "By the like reason the want of language in children renders it necessary for them to have recourse to gestures."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1029.

they wanted nothing of the perfection of making themselves understood. Lovers are angry, reconciled, intreat, thank, appoint, and, in short, speak all things by their eyes;

> "E'l silentio ancor suole
> Aver prieghi e parole."[1]

What of the hands? We require, promise, call, dismiss, threaten, pray, supplicate, deny, refuse, interrogate, admire, number, confess, repent, confound, blush, doubt, instruct, command, incite, encourage, swear, testify, accuse, condemn, absolve, abuse, despise, defy, despite, flatter, applaud, bless, humiliate, mock, reconcile, recommend, exalt, entertain, congratulate, complain, grieve, despair, wonder, exclaim, and what not, with a variation and multiplication to the emulation of speech. With the head we invite, demur, confess, deny, give the lie, welcome, honour, reverence, disdain, demand, turn out, rejoice, lament, reject, caress, rebuke, submit, huff, encourage, threaten, assure, inquire. What of the eyebrows? What of the shoulders? There is not a motion that does not speak, and in an intelligible language without discipline, and a public language that every one understands: whence it should follow, the variety and use distinguished from those of others, that this should rather be judged the special property of human nature. I omit what particular necessity on the sudden suggests to those who are in need; the alphabets upon the fingers, grammars in gesture, and the sciences which are only by them exercised and expressed, and the nations that Pliny reports to have no other language.[2] An ambassador of the city of Abdera, after a long harangue to Agis, king of Sparta, demanded of him, "Well, Sir, what answer must I return to my fellow citizens?" "That I have given thee leave," said he, "to say what thou wouldst, and as much as thou wouldst, without ever speaking a word."[3] Is not this a silent speaking, and very easy to be understood?

As to the rest, what is there in our intelligence that we

[1] "Even silence in a lover can express entreaty."—TASSO, *Aminta*, ii. Chor.

[2] Book vi. c. 30.

[3] Plutarch, Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.

do not see in the operations of animals? Is there a polity better ordered, the offices better distributed, and more inviolably observed and maintained, than that of bees? Can we imagine that such and so regular a distribution of employments can be carried on without reason and prudence?

> "His quidam signis atque hæc exempla sequuti,
> Esse apibus partem divinæ mentis, et haustus
> Æthereos dixere."[1]

The swallows that we see at the return of the spring, searching all the corners of our houses for the most commodious places wherein to build their nests, do they seek without judgment, and, amongst a thousand, choose out the most proper for their purpose, without discretion? In that elegant and admirable contexture of their buildings, can birds rather make choice of a square figure than a round, of an obtuse than of a right angle, without knowing their properties and effects? Do they bring water and then clay without knowing that the hardness of the latter grows softer by being wet? Do they mat their palaces with moss or down, without foreseeing that their tender young will lie more safe and easy? Do they secure themselves from the rainy winds, and place their lodgings towards the east, without knowing the different qualities of those winds, and considering that one is more wholesome than the other? Why does the spider make her web tighter in one place and slacker in another? Why now make one sort of knot and then another, if she has not deliberation, thought, and conclusion? We sufficiently discover in most of their works how much animals excel us, and how weak our art is to imitate them. We see, nevertheless, in our ruder performances that we there employ all our faculties, and apply the utmost power of our souls; why do we not conclude the same of them? Why should we attribute to I know not what natural and servile inclination the works that surpass all we can do by nature and art? Wherein, before we are aware, we give them a mighty advantage over us, in making nature, with a maternal

[1] "From which signs and examples some have held that there is in bees a portion of the divine intelligence and a heavenly emanation."—VIRGIL, *Georg.*, iv. 219.

sweetness, to accompany and lead them, as it were, by the hand, to all the actions and commodities of their life, whilst she leaves us to chance and fortune, and to seek out, by art, the things that are necessary to our conversation; at the same time denying us the means of being able, by any instruction or contention of understanding, to arrive at the natural sufficiency of beasts; so that their brutish stupidity surpasses in all conveniences all that our divine intelligence can do. Really, at this rate, we might with great reason call her an unjust stepmother: but it is nothing so: our polity is not so irregular and deformed.

Nature has been universally kind to all her creatures, and there is not one she has not amply furnished with all means necessary for the conversation of its being; for the common complaints that I hear men make (as the license of their opinions one while lifts them up to the clouds, and then again depresses them to the Antipodes), that we are the only animal abandoned, naked upon the bare earth, tied and bound, not having wherewithal to arm and clothe us, but by the spoil of others; whereas nature has covered all other creatures with shells, husks, bark, hair, wool, prickles, leather, down, feathers, scales, silk, according to the necessities of their being; has armed them with talons, teeth, horns, wherewith to assault and defend, and has herself taught them that which is most proper for them, to swim, to run, to fly, and to sing, whereas man neither knows how to walk, speak, eat, or do anything but weep, without teaching.

"Tum porro puer, ut sævis projectus ab undis
Navita, nudus humi jacet, infans, indigus omni
Vitali auxilio, quum primum in luminis oras
Nixibus ex alvo matris natura profudit,
Vagituque locum lugubri complet; ut æquum est
Cui tantum in vita restet transire malorum.
At variæ crescunt pecudes, armenta, feræque,
Nec crepitacula eis opus est, nec cuiquam adhibenda est
Almæ nutricis blanda atque infracta loquela:
Nec varias quærunt vestes pro tempore cæli:
Denique non armis opus est, non mœnibus altis,
Queis sua tutentur, quando omnibus omnia large
Tellus ipsa parit, naturaque dædala rerum:"[1]

[1] "Then the infant, like a mariner tossed by raging seas upon the shore, lies naked on the earth, destitute at his very birth, of

those complaints are false; there is in the polity of the world a greater equality and more uniform relation. Our skins are as sufficient to defend us from the injuries of the weather, as theirs from them: witness several nations that still know not the use of clothes. Our ancient Gauls were but slenderly clad, no more than the Irish, our neighbours, in so cold a climate. But we may better judge of this by ourselves: for all those parts that we are pleased to expose to the wind and the air, the face, the hands, the lips, the shoulders, the head, according to various custom, are found very able to endure it: if there be a tender part about us, and that seems to be in danger of cold, it should be the stomach where the digestion is, and yet our fathers had this always open, and our ladies, tender and delicate as they are, go sometimes half bare as low as the navel. Nor is the binding and swathing of infants any more necessary; and the Lacedæmonian mothers brought up theirs in all liberty of motion of members, without any ligature at all.[1] Our crying is common to us, with most other animals, and there are but few creatures that are not observed to groan and bemoan themselves a long time after they come into the world, forasmuch as it is a behaviour suitable to the weakness wherein they find themselves. As to the usage of eating, it is in us, as in them, natural, and without instruction;

"Sentit enim vim quisque suam quam possit abuti:"[2]

who doubts but an infant, arrived to the strength of feeding himself, may shift to seek his food? and the earth produces and offers him wherewithal to supply his necessity without other culture and art, and if not at all times, no more does she do it to beasts; witness the provision we see ants and

all supports of life, from the time when, nature first presenting him to the day, he fills the air with doleful cries, as foreseeing life's future miseries; but beasts, wild and tame, of themselves grow up: they need no rattle, no nurse with soothing words to teach them to talk; they do not look out for different robes according to the seasons; and need no arms nor walls to protect them and their goods: earth and nature in all abundance produce all things whereof they have need."—LUCRETIUS, v. 223.

[1] Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus, c. 13.

[2] "For every one soon finds out his natural force, to use or abuse."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1032.

other creatures hoard up against the dead seasons of the year. The late discovered nations, so abundantly furnished with meat and natural drink, without trouble or preparation, give us to understand that bread is not our only food, and that without tillage our mother nature has provided us abundantly with all we stand in need of; nay, it would appear, still more fully and plentifully than she does at present, when we have mixed up these with our own industry:

> "Et tellus nitidas fruges, vinetaque læta
> Sponte sua primum mortalibus ipsa creavit;
> Ipsa dedit dulces fœtus et pabula læta;
> Quæ nunc vix nostro grandescunt aucta labore,
> Conterimusque boves, et vires agricolarum:"[1]

the depravity and irregularity of our appetite outstrip all the inventions we can contrive to satisfy it.

As to arms, we have more that are natural than most other animals, more various motions of the limbs, and naturally and without lessons, extract more service from them: those that are trained up to fight naked, are seen to throw themselves upon hazard like our own; if some beasts surpass us in this advantage, we surpass several others. And the industry of fortifying the body and protecting it by acquired means we have by instinct and natural precept; as, for examples: the elephant sharpens and whets the teeth he makes use of in war (for he has particular ones for that service which he spares and never employs at all to any other use); when bulls go to fight, they toss and throw the dust about them; boars whet their tusks; and the ichneumon, when he is about to engage with the crocodile, fortifies his body by covering and encrusting it all over with close-wrought, well-kneaded slime, as with a cuirass: why shall we not say, that it is also natural for us to arm ourselves with wood and iron?

As to speech, it is certain that, if it be not natural, it is not necessary. Nevertheless, I believe that a child who had been brought up in absolute solitude, remote from all

[1] "The earth at first spontaneously afforded choice fruits and wines to mankind; gave them prolific herds, and glowing harvests, which now scarcely by art more abundantly yield, though men and oxen strive to improve the soil."—LUCRETIUS, ii. 1157.

society of men (which would be a trial very hard to make) would have some kind of speech to express his meaning: and 'tis not to be supposed that nature would have denied that to us which she has given to several other animals: for what other than speech is the faculty we observe in them of complaining, rejoicing, calling to one another for succour, and the softer murmurings of love, which they perform with the voice? And why should they not speak to one another? they speak very well to us, and we to them; in how many several ways do we speak to our dogs, and they answer us? We converse with them in another sort of language and other appellations than we do with birds, hogs, oxen, and horses; and alter the idiom according to the kind.

"Cosi per entro loro schiera bruna
S'amusa l'uno con l'altra formica,
Forse a spiar lor via e lor fortuna."[1]

Lactantius[2] seems to attribute to beasts not only speech, but laughter also. And the difference of language which is manifest amongst us, according to the variety of countries, is also observed in animals of the same kind: Aristotle,[3] in proof of this, instances the various calls of partridges, according to the situation of places:

"Variæque volucres . . .
Longe alias alio faciunt in tempore voces . . .
Et partim mutant cum tempestatibus una
Raucisonos cantus."[4]

But it is yet to be known what language this child would speak; and of this what is said by guess has no great weight. If any one should allege to me, in opposition to this opinion, that those who are naturally deaf, speak not: I answer that this follows not only because they could not receive the instruction of speaking by the ear, but because the sense of hearing, of which they are deprived, has relation to that of speaking, holding together by a natural

[1] "So amongst their sable bands, one ant with another is seen to communicate: observe, perhaps, each other's ways and ask what prizes they have brought home."—DANTE, *Purg.*, c. xxvi. 34.

[2] Instit. Divin., iii. 10. [3] Hist. of Animals, lib. iv. c. 9.

[4] "Various birds make quite different notes; some their hoarse songs change with the seasons."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1077, 1080, 2, 3.

tie; in such manner, that what we speak we must first speak to ourselves within, and make it first sound in our own ears, before we can utter it to others.

All this I have said to prove the resemblance there is in human things, and to bring us back and join us to the crowd: we are neither above or below the rest. All that is under heaven, says the wise man, runs one law and one fortune:

"Indupedita suis fatalibus omnia vinclis."[1]

There is indeed some difference; there are orders and degrees; but 'tis under the aspect of one same nature:

"Res . . . quæque suo ritu procedit; et omnes
Fœdere naturæ certo discrimina servant."[2]

Man must be compelled and restrained within the bounds of this polity. Wretched being, he is really not in a condition to step over the rail; he is fettered and circumscribed, he is subjected to a co-ordinate obligation with the other creatures of his class, and of a very humble condition, without any prerogative or preëminence true and real; that which he attributes to himself, by vain fancy and opinion, has neither body nor taste. And if it be so, that he only of all the animals has this privilege of the imagination, and this irregularity of thoughts representing to him that which is, that which is not, and that he would have, the false and the true; 'tis an advantage dearly bought, and of which he has very little reason to be proud; for from that springs the principal fountain of all the evils that befall him, sin, sickness, irresolution, affliction, despair. I say then (to return to my subject) that there is no probability to induce a man to believe, that beasts by natural and compulsory tendency, do the same things that we do by our choice and industry; we ought from like effects, to conclude like faculties, and from greater effects greater faculties, and consequently confess, that the same reason, the same method by which we operate, are common with them, or

[1] "All things are bound in the same fatal chains."—LUCRETIUS, v. 874.

[2] "All things proceed by their own rules, and observe the limits of nature's law."—*Idem, ibid.*, 921.

that they have others that are better. Why should we imagine in them this natural constraint, who experience no such effect in ourselves? Add to which, that it is more honourable to be guided and obliged to act regularly by a natural and irresistible condition, and nearer allied to the Divinity, than to act regularly by a licentious and fortuitous liberty, and more safe to intrust the reins of our conduct in the hands of nature than in our own. The vanity of our presumption is the cause that we had rather owe our sufficiency to our own strength than to her bounty, and that we enrich the other animals with natural goods, and renounce them in their favour, to honour and ennoble ourselves with goods acquired; very foolishly in my opinion; for I should as much value parts naturally and purely my own, as those I had begged and obtained from education: it is not in our power to obtain a nobler reputation, than to be favoured of God and nature.

For this reason, consider the fox, of which the people of Thrace make use when they desire to pass over the ice of some frozen river, turning him out before them to that purpose; should we see him lay his ear upon the bank of the river, down to the ice, to listen if from a more remote or nearer distance he can hear the noise of the water's current, and according as he finds by that the ice to be of a less or greater thickness, retire or advance:[1] should we not have reason thence to believe that he had the same thoughts in his head that we should have upon the like occasion, and that it is a ratiocination and consequence drawn from natural sense: "that which makes a noise, runs; that which runs, is not frozen: what is not frozen is liquid; and that which is liquid yields to impression?" For to attribute this to a vivacity of the sense of hearing without meditation and consequence, is a chimera that cannot enter into the imagination. We may suppose the same of the many subtleties and inventions with which beasts protect themselves from enterprises we plot against them.

And if we would make an advantage of this that it is in our power to seize them, to employ them in our service,

[1] Plutarch, On the Industry of Animals, c. 12.

and to use them at our pleasure, 'tis but still the same advantage we have over one another. We have our slaves upon these terms; and the Climacidæ:[1] were they not women in Syria who, being on all fours, served for a step-ladder, by which the ladies mounted the coach? And the majority of free persons surrender, for very trivial advantages, their life and being into the power of another; the wives and concubines of the Thracians contended who should be chosen to be slain upon their husband's tomb.[2] Have tyrants ever failed of finding men enough devoted to their service; some of them moreover, adding this necessity of accompanying them in death as in life? whole armies have so bound themselves to their captains.[3] The form of the oath in that rude school of fencers, who were to fight it out to the last, was in these words: "We swear to suffer ourselves to be chained, burned, beaten, killed with the sword, and to endure all that true gladiators suffer from their master, religiously engaging both bodies and souls in his service;"[4]

"Ure meum, si vis, flamma caput, et pete ferro
Corpus, et in torto verbere terga seca:"[5]

this was an obligation indeed, and yet there were, in some years, ten thousand who entered into it and lost themselves in it. When the Scythians interred their king, they strangled upon his body the most beloved of his concubines, his cup-bearer, the master of his horse, his chamberlain, the usher of his chamber, and his cook; and upon his anniversary they killed fifty horses, mounted by fifty pages, whom they had impaled up the spine of the back to the throat, and there left them planted in parade about his tomb.[6] The men that serve us do it more cheaply, and for a less careful and favourable usage than that we entertain our hawks, horses, and dogs with. To what solicitude do we not submit for the convenience of these? I do not think that servants of the most abject condition would willingly

[1] Plutarch, How to distinguish a Flatterer from a Friend.
[2] Herodotus, v. 5. [3] Cæsar, De Bell. Gall., iii. 22.
[4] Petronius, Sat., c. 117.
[5] "Burn my head with fire if you will, wound me with steel, and scourge my shoulders with twisted wire."—TIBULLUS, i. 90, 21.
[6] Herodotus, iv. 71

do that for their masters, that princes think it an honour to do for these beasts. Diogenes seeing his relations solicitous to redeem him from servitude: "They are fools," said he, "'tis he that keeps and feeds me is my servant, not I his."[1] And they, who make so much of beasts, ought rather to be said to serve them, than to be served by them. And withal they have this more generous quality, that one lion never submitted to another lion, nor one horse to another, for want of courage. As we go to the chase of beasts, so do tigers and lions to the chase of men, and they do the same execution one upon another, dogs upon hares, pikes upon tench, swallows upon flies, sparrowhawks upon blackbirds and larks:

> "Serpente ciconia pullos
> Nutrit, et inventa per devia rura lacerta, . . .
> Et leporem aut capream famulæ Jovis et generosæ
> In saltu venantur aves."[2]

We divide the quarry, as well as the pains and labour of the chase, with our hawks and hounds; and above Amphipolis in Thrace, the hawkers and wild falcons equally divide the prey;[3] as also, along the lake Mæotis, if the fisherman does not honestly leave the wolves an equal share of what he has caught, they presently go and tear his nets in pieces. And as we have a way of hunting that is carried on more by subtlety than force, as angling with line and hook, there is also the like amongst animals. Aristotle says,[4] that the cuttle-fish casts a gut out of her throat as long as a line, which she extends and draws back at pleasure; and as she perceives some little fish approach, she lets it nibble upon the end of this gut, lying herself concealed in the sand or mud, and by little and little draws it in, till the little fish is so near her, that at one spring she may surprise it.

As to what concerns strength, there is no creature in the world exposed to so many injuries as man: we need not a whale, an elephant or a crocodile, nor any such animals, of

[1] Diogenes Laertius, vi. 75.

[2] "The stork feeds her young with snakes and lizards found in bye-places. Jove's eagle hunts in the woods for hares and kids, and so the nobler birds of prey."—JUVENAL, xiv. 74, 81.

[3] Pliny, Nat. Hist., x. 8.

[4] Plutarch, On the Industry of Animals, c. 28.

which one alone is sufficient to defeat a great number of men, to do our business: lice are sufficient to vacate Sylla's dictatorship; and the heart and life of a great and triumphant emperor is the breakfast of a little worm.[1]

Why should we say that it is only for man by knowledge, improved by art and meditation, to distinguish the things commodious for his being and proper for the cure of his diseases from those which are not so; to know the virtues of rhubarb and fern: when we see the goats of Candia, when wounded with an arrow, amongst a million of plants choose out dittany for their cure, and the tortoise, when she has eaten of a viper, immediately go to look out for marjoram to purge her; the dragon rubs and clears his eyes with fennel; the storks give themselves clysters of sea-water; the elephants draw out, not only of their own bodies and those of their companions, but out of the bodies of their masters too (witness the elephant of King Porus, whom Alexander defeated[2]) the dart and javelins thrown at them in battle, and that so dexterously that we ourselves could not do it with so little pain; why do not we say here also that this is knowledge and prudence? For to allege to their dispäragement that 'tis by the sole instruction and dictate of nature that they know all this, is not to take from them the dignity of knowledge and prudence, but with greater reason to attribute it to them than to us, for the honour of so infallible a mistress. Chrysippus,[3] though in all other things as scornful a judge of the condition of animals as any other philosopher whatever, considering the motions of a dog who, coming to a place where three ways meet, either to hunt after his master he has lost, or in pursuit of some game that flies before him, goes snuffing first in one of the ways and then in another, and after having made himself sure of two, without finding the trace of what he seeks, throws himself into the third without examination, is forced to confess that this reasoning is in the dog: "I have followed my master by foot to this place; he must, of necessity, be gone by one of these three ways; he is not

[1] Sylla died of the disease in question at the age of sixty.
[2] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 12.
[3] Sextus Empiricus, Pyrrh., Hypot., i 14.

gone this way nor that; he must then infallibly be gone this other:" and that assuring himself by such reasoning and conclusion, he makes no use of his nose in the third way nor ever lays it to the ground, but suffers himself to be carried on by the force of reason. This mode, which is purely logical, and this method of propositions divided and conjoined, and the right enumeration of parts, is it not every whit as good that the dog knows all this of himself as if he had learnt it of Trapezuntius?[1]

Nor are animals incapable of being instructed after our method. We teach blackbirds, ravens, pies, and parrots to speak; and the facility wherewith we see them render their voices and breath so supple and pliant to be formed and confined within a certain number of letters and syllables, evinces that they have a reasoning examination of things within that makes them so docile and willing to learn.

Everybody, I believe, is glutted with the several sorts of tricks that tumblers teach their dogs; the dances where they do not miss any one cadence of the sound they hear; the many various motions and leaps they make them perform by the command of a word. But I observe with more admiration this effect, which, nevertheless, is very common, in the dogs that lead the blind both in the country and in cities: I have taken notice how they stop at certain doors, where they are wont to receive alms; how they avoid the encounter of coaches and carts, even where they have sufficient room to pass; I have seen them, along the trench of a town, forsake a plain and even path, and take a worse, only to keep their masters further from the ditch. How could a man have made this dog understand that it was his office to look to his master's safety only, and to despise his own convenience to serve him? And how had he the knowledge that a way was large enough for him that was not so for a blind man? Can all this be apprehended without ratiocination?

[1] Georgius Trapezuntius, or George of Trebizond, born 1396, died 1486; a learned translator of and commentator upon Aristotle and other authors. Cotton renders it: "By rules of art." Coste ludicrously translates it: "By knowledge of that phrase in geometry which they call a trapezium."

I must not omit what Plutarch[1] says he saw of a dog at Rome with the Emperor Vespasian, the father, at the theatre of Marcellus: this dog served a player who acted a farce of several gestures and several personages, and had therein his part. He had, amongst other things, to counterfeit himself for some time dead, by reason of a certain drug he was supposed to have eaten: after he had swallowed a piece of bread, which passed for the drug, he began after a while to tremble and stagger, as if he was astounded: at last, stretching himself out stiff, as if he had been dead, he suffered himself to be drawn and dragged from place to place, as it was his part to do; and afterward, when he knew it to be time, he began first gently to stir, as if newly awakened out of profound sleep, and lifting up his head, looked about him after such a manner as astonished all the spectators.

The oxen that served in the royal gardens of Susa to water them and turn certain great wheels to draw water for that purpose, to which buckets were fastened (such as there are many in Languedoc), being ordered every one to draw a hundred turns a day, they were so accustomed to this number that it was impossible by force to make them draw one turn more, but, their task being performed, they would suddenly stop and stand still.[2] We are almost men before we can count a hundred, and have lately discovered nations that have no knowledge of numbers at all.

There is still more understanding required in the teaching of others than in being taught; now, setting aside what Democritus held,[3] and proved, that most of the arts we have were taught us by other animals, as the spider has taught us to weave and sew, the swallow to build, the swan and nightingale music, and several animals, in imitating them, to take medicines: Aristotle[4] is of opinion that the nightingales teach their young ones to sing and spend a great deal of time and care in it, whence it happens that those we bring up in cages and that have not had time to learn of their parents, lose much of the grace of their singing: we may judge by this that they improve by discipline and

[1] On the Industry of Animals, c. 18.
[2] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 20.
[3] Idem, ibid., c. 14.
[4] Idem, ibid., c. 18.

study: and even amongst the wild birds they are not all one and alike; every one has learnt to do better or worse, according to its capacity; and so jealous are they of one another whilst learning, that they contend with emulation, and with so vigorous a contention that sometimes the vanquished fall dead upon the spot, the breath rather failing than the voice. The younger ruminate pensive, and begin to imitate some broken notes; the disciple listens to the master's lesson, and gives the best account it is able; they are silent by turns; one may hear faults corrected and observe reprehensions of the teacher.[1] "I have formerly seen," says Arrian, "an elephant having a cymbal hung at each leg, and another fastened to his trunk, at the sound of which all the others danced round about him, rising and falling at certain cadences, as they were guided by the instrument, and it was delightful to hear this harmony." In the spectacles of Rome, there were ordinarily seen elephants taught to move and dance to the sound of the voice, dances wherein were several changes and steps, and cadences very hard to learn.[2] And some have been seen, in private, so intent upon their lesson as to practise it by themselves, that they might not be chidden nor beaten by their masters.[3]

But this other story of the magpie, of which we have Plutarch himself for warrant,[4] is very strange; she was in a barber's shop at Rome, and did wonders in imitating with her voice whatever she heard. It happened one day that certain trumpeters stood a good while sounding before the shop. After that, and all the next day, the magpie was pensive, dumb, and melancholy, which everybody wondered at and thought that the noise of the trumpets had thus stupefied and dazed her, and that her voice was gone with her hearing; but they found at last that it was a profound meditation and a retiring into herself, her thoughts exercising and preparing her voice to imitate the sound of those trumpets; so that the first voice she uttered was perfectly to imitate their strains, stops, and changes: having for this

[1] Pliny, Nat. Hist., x. 29. [2] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 12.
[3] Idem, ibid., c. 12. Pliny, Nat. Hist., viii. 3.
[4] *Ubi supra*, c. 18.

new lesson, quitted and disdained all she had learned before.

I will not omit this other example of a dog, which the same Plutarch (I can't tell them in order, as to which I get confused; nor do I observe it here any more than elsewhere in my work) says[1] he saw on shipboard: this dog being puzzled how to get at the oil that was in the bottom of a jar and which he could not reach with his tongue, by reason of the narrow mouth of the vessel, went and fetched stones, and let them fall into the jar, till he made the oil rise so high, that he could reach it. What is this but an effect of a very subtle capacity? 'Tis said that the ravens of Barbary do the same, when the water they would drink is too low.[2] This action is something akin to what Juba, a king of their nation, relates of the elephants:[3] that, when by the craft of the hunter, one of them is trapped in certain deep pits prepared for them and covered over with brush to deceive them, all the rest diligently bring a great many stones and logs of wood to raise the bottom so that he may get out. But this animal in several other features comes so near to human capacity, that should I particularly relate all that experience has delivered to us, I should easily have granted me what I ordinarily maintain, namely, that there is more difference betwixt such and such a man, than betwixt such a man and such a beast. The keeper of an elephant, in a private house of Syria, robbed him every meal of the half of his allowance: one day his master would himself feed him and poured the full measure of barley he had ordered for his allowance into his manger; at which the elephant, casting an angry look at his keeper, with his trunk separated the one half from the other, and thrust it aside, thus declaring the wrong that was done him. And another, having a keeper that mixed stones with his corn to make up the measure, came to the pot where he was boiling flesh for his own dinner, and filled it with ashes.[4] These are particular facts: but that which all the world has seen, and all the world knows, is that in all the armies of the East one of their greatest elements of strength was ele-

[1] *Ubi supra*, c. 12.
[2] Idem, ibid., c. 10.
[3] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 12.
[4] Idem, ibid., c. 12.

phants, with whom they did without comparison far more execution, than we do now with our artillery, which is, as it were, in their stead in a day of battle (as may easily be judged by such as are read in ancient history);

> "Siquidem Tyrio servire solebant
> Annibali, et nostris ducibus, regique Molosso
> Horum majores, et dorso ferre cohortes,
> Partem aliquam belli, et euntem in prælia turrim."[1]

They must of necessity very confidently have relied upon fidelity and understanding of these beasts, when they entrusted them with the vanguard of a battle, where the least stop they should have made, by reason of the bulk and heaviness of their bodies, and the least fright that should have made them face about upon their own people, had been enough to spoil all. And there are but few examples where it has happened that they have fallen foul upon their own troops, whereas we ourselves break into our own battalions and rout one another. They had the commission, not of one simple movement only, but of many several things they were to perform in the battle; as the Spaniards did to their dogs in their new conquest of the Indies, to whom they gave pay and allowed them a share in the spoil; and those animals showed as much dexterity and judgment in pursuing the victory and stopping the pursuit, in charging and retiring as occasion required, and in distinguishing their friends from their enemies, as they did ardour and fierceness.[2]

We more admire and value things that are unusual and strange than those of ordinary observation; I had not else so long insisted upon these examples: for I believe, whoever shall strictly observe what we ordinarily see in those animals we have amongst us, may there find as wonderful effects as those we fetch from remote countries and ages. 'Tis one same nature that rolls her course, and whoever has sufficiently considered the present state of things, might certainly conclude as to both the future and the past. I

[1] "The ancestors of these served in the armies of Carthaginian Hannibal, and of our own captains, and of the Molossian king (Pyrrhus); upon their backs they used to bear whole cohorts when they went to war."—JUVENAL, xii. 107.

[2] And see Pliny, viii. 40; Olear., Var Hist., xiv. 46.

have formerly seen men brought hither by sea, from very distant countries, whose language not being understood by us, and, moreover, their mien, countenance, and dress, being quite different from ours, which of us did not repute them savages and brutes? Who did not attribute it to stupidity and want of common sense, to see them mute, ignorant of the French tongue, ignorant of our salutations, cringes, our port and behaviour, from which, of course, all human nature must take its pattern and example. All that seems strange to us, and what we do not understand we condemn. The same thing happens also in the judgment we make of beasts. They have several conditions like to ours; from those we may by comparison draw some conjecture: but of those qualities that are particular to them, how know we what to make of them? The horses, dogs, oxen, sheep, birds, and most of the animals that live amongst us, know our voices, and suffer themselves to be governed by them: so did Crassus' lamprey, that came when he called it;[1] as also do the eels that are in the lake Arethusa; and I have seen ponds where the fishes run to eat at a certain call of those who used to feed them,

> "Nomen habent, et ad magistri
> Vocem quisque sui venit citatus;"[2]

we may judge from that. We may also say that elephants have some share of religion,[3] forasmuch as, after several washings and purifications, they are observed to lift up their trunks like arms, and fixing their eyes towards the rising sun, continue long in meditation and contemplation, at certain hours of the day of their own motion without instruction or precept. But because we do not see any such signs in other animals, we cannot thence conclude that they are without religion, nor form any judgment of what is concealed from us; as we discern something in this action[4] which the philosopher Cleanthes took notice of because it something resembles our own; he saw, he says, ants go from their ant-hill carrying the dead body of an ant

[1] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 24.

[2] "Each has its own name, and comes at the master's call."—MARTIAL, iv. 29, 6.

[3] Pliny, Nat Hist., viii. 1.

[4] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 12.

towards another ant-hill, from which several other ants came out to meet them, as if to speak with them; whither, after having been some while together, the last returned, to consult, you may suppose, with their fellow-citizens, and so made two or three journeys, by reason of the difficulty of capitulation: in the conclusion, the last comers brought the first worm out of their burrow, as it were for the ransom of the defunct, which the first laid upon their backs and carried home, leaving the dead body to the others. This was the interpretation that Cleanthes gave of this transaction, as manifesting that those creatures that have no voice are not nevertheless without mutual communication and dealings, whereof 'tis through our own defect that we do not participate, and for that reason foolishly take upon us to pass our judgment upon it. But they yet produce other effects much beyond our capacity, to which we are so far from being able to arrive by imitation, that we cannot so much as by imagination conceive them. Many are of opinion that in the great and last naval engagement that Antony lost to Augustus, his admiral galley was stayed in the middle of her course by the little fish the Latins call Remora, by reason of the property she has of staying all sorts of vessels to which she fastens herself.[1] And the Emperor Caligula, sailing with a great navy upon the coast of Romania, his galley alone was suddenly stayed by the same fish; which he caused to be taken, fastened as it was to the keel of his ship, very angry that such a little animal could resist at once the sea, the wind and the force of all his oars, by being merely fastened by the beak to his galley (for it is a shell-fish); and was moreover, not without great reason, astonished that being brought to him in the long-boat it had no longer the strength it had in the water.[2] A citizen of Cyzicus formerly acquired the reputation of a good mathematician[3] from having learned the ways of the hedgehog: he has his burrow open in divers places and to several winds, and foreseeing the wind that is to come stops the hole on that side, which the citizen observing, gave the city certain prediction of the

[1] Pliny, xxxii. 1. Remora, "delay, hindrance."
[2] Pliny, xxxii. 1.
[3] Or rather, perhaps, astrologer.—Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 15.

wind which was presently to blow. The cameleon takes his colour from the place upon which he is laid; but the polypus[1] gives himself what colour he pleases, according to occasion, either to conceal himself from what he fears, or from what he has a design to seize: in the cameleon 'tis a passive, but in the polypus 'tis an active change. We have some changes of colour, as in fear, anger, shame, and other passions, that alter our complexion; but it is by the effect of suffering, as with the cameleon. It is in the power of the jaundice, indeed, to make us turn yellow, but 'tis not in the power of our own will. Now these effects that we discern in other animals, much greater than our own, imply some more excellent faculty in them, unknown to us; as, 'tis to be presumed, are several other qualities and capacities of theirs of which no appearance reaches us.

Amongst all the predictions of elder times, the most ancient and the most certain were those taken from the flights of birds;[2] we have nothing like it, not anything so much to be admired. That rule and order of moving the wing, from which were prognosticated the consequences of future things, must of necessity be guided by some excellent means to so noble an operation: for to attribute this great effect to any natural disposition, without the intelligence, consent and reason of the creature by which it is produced, is an opinion evidently false. And, in proof, the torpedo has this quality, not only to benumb all the members that touch her, but even through the nets to transmit a heavy dulness into the hands of those that move and handle them; nay, it is further said that, if one pour water upon her, he will feel this numbness mount up the water to the hand and stupefy the feeling through the water.[3] This

[1] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 28.

[2] Sextus Empiric. Pyrr. Hyp., i. 14.

[3] "Montaigne would mislead us here, or, rather, is misled himself; for, because the torpedo benumbs the members of those who touch it, and because the cranes, swallows, and the other birds of passage change their climate according to the seasons of the year, it by no means follows that the predictions, pretended to be derived from the flight of birds, are founded on certain faculties, which those birds have, of discovering things future to such as take the pains to watch their various motions. The vivacity of our author's genius has made him, in this place,

is a miraculous force; but 'tis not useless to the torpedo; she knows it and makes use of it; for to catch the prey she desires she will bury herself in the mud that other fishes, swimming over her, struck and benumbed with this coldness of hers, may fall into her power. Cranes, swallows, and other birds of passage, by shifting their abodes according to the seasons, sufficiently manifest the knowledge they have of their divining faculty, and put it in use. Huntsmen assure us that to cull out from amongst a great many puppies, that which ought to be preserved for the best, the simple way is to refer the choice to the dam, as thus: take them and carry them out of the kennel, and the first she brings back, will certainly be the best; or if you make a show as if you would environ the kennel with fire, the one she first catches up to save: by which it appears they have a sort of prognostic that we have not; or that they have some capacity in judging of their whelps other and clearer than we have.

The manner of coming into the world, of engendering, nourishing, acting, moving, living and dying of beasts, is so near to ours, that whatever we retrench from their moving causes and add to our own condition above theirs, can by no means proceed from any meditation of our own reason. For the regimen of our health, physicians propose to us the example of the beasts' way of living; for this saying has in all times been in the mouth of the people:

confound things together that are very different. For the properties of the torpedo, cranes, and swallows, appear from sensible effects; but the predictions said to be derived from the flight of certain birds, by virtue of the rule and method of the motion of their wings, are only founded upon human imaginations, the reality whereof was never proved; which have varied according to times and places, and which, at length, have lost all credit with the very people that were most possessed with them: but I am of opinion, that Montaigne only makes use here of the divining faculty of the birds, to puzzle those dogmatists who decide so positively, that the animals have neither reason nor intellect; in this he has imitated Sextus Empiricus, in Pyrr. Hypot., lib. i. cap. 14, p. 16, who, attacking the dogmatist on this very article, says expressly, 'That it cannot be denied, that the birds have the use of speech, and more penetration than we have; because, not only by their knowledge of the present, but also of things future, they discover the latter, to such as are capable of understanding them, by their voice, and several other means.'"—COSTE.

"Tenez chaulds les pieds et la teste;
Au demourant vivez en beste."[1]

Generation is the principle of natural action. We have a certain disposition of members most proper and convenient for us in that affair: nevertheless, some order us to conform to the posture of brutes, as the most effectual:

"More ferarum,
Quadrupedumque magis ritu, plerumque putantur
Concipere uxores: quia sic loca sumere possunt,
Pectoribus positis, sublatis semina lumbis;"[2]

and condemn as hurtful those indecent and indiscreet motions the women have superadded to the work; recalling them to the example and practice of the beasts of their own sex, more sober and modest:

"Nam mulier prohibet se concipere atque repugnat,
Clunibus ipsa viri Venerem si læta retractet,
Atque exossato ciet omni pectore fluctus.
Ejicit enim sulci recta regione viaque
Vomerem, atque locis avertit seminis ictum."[3]

If it be justice to render to every one his due, the beasts that serve, love, and defend their benefactors, and that pursue and fall upon strangers and those who offend them, do in this represent a certain air of our justice: as also in observing a very equitable equality in the distribution of what they have to their young. As to friendship, they have it, without comparison, more vivid and constant than men have. King Lysimachus' dog, Hyrcanus,[4] his master being dead, lay upon his bed, obstinately refusing either to eat or drink, and the day that his body was burnt, he took a run and leaped into the fire, where he was consumed. As also did the dog of one Pyrrhus,[5] for he would not stir from off his master's bed from the time that he died; and when they carried him away let himself be carried with him, and at last leaped into the pile where they burnt his master's body. There are certain inclinations of affection

[1] "Keep warm your feet and head; as to the rest, live like a beast."
[2] Lucretius, iv. 1261. The sense is given in the text.
[3] Lucretius, iv. 1266. The sense is given in the text.
[4] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 13. [5] Idem, ibid.

which sometimes spring in us without the consultation of reason and by a fortuitous temerity, which others call sympathy: of this beasts are as capable as we. We see horses form an acquaintance with one another, that we have much ado to make them eat or travel when separated; we observe them to fancy a particular colour in those of their own kind, and where they meet it, run to it with great joy and demonstrations of good-will, and to have a dislike and hatred for some other colour. Animals have choice, as well as we, in their amours, and cull out their mistresses; neither are they exempt from our extreme and implacable jealousies and envies.

Desires are either natural and necessary, as to eat and drink; or natural and not necessary, as the coupling with females; or neither natural nor necessary: of which last sort are almost all the desires of men; they are all superfluous and artificial; for 'tis not to be believed how little will satisfy nature, how little she has left us to desire; our ragouts and kickshaws are not of her reputation; the Stoics say that a man may live on an olive a day; our delicacy in our wines is no part of her instruction, nor the over-charging the appetites of love:

> "Numquid ego a te
> Magno prognatum deposco consule cunnum."[1]

These irregular desires, that ignorance of good and a false opinion have infused into us, are so many that they almost exclude all the natural, just as if there were so great a number of strangers in a city as to thrust out the natural inhabitants and, usurping their ancient rights and privileges, extinguish their authority and power. Animals are much more regular than we, and keep themselves with greater moderation within the limits nature has prescribed; but yet not so exactly, that they have not some analogy with our debauches: and as there have been known furious desires that have compelled men to the love of beasts, so there have been examples of beasts that have fallen in love with us, and admit monstrous affections betwixt different kinds: witness the elephant, who was rival to Aristophanes

[1] Horace, Sat. i., 2, 69, as much as to say the maid's as good as the mistress.

the grammarian in the love of a young flower-girl in the city of Alexandria, which was nothing behind him in all the offices of a very passionate suitor: for going through the market where they sold fruit, he would take some in his trunk and carry it to her: he would as much as possible keep her always in his sight, and would sometimes put his trunk under her neck kerchief into her bosom to feel her breasts.[1] They tell also of a dragon in love with a maid; and of a goose enamoured of a child in the town of Asopus: of a ram that was a lover of the minstreless Glaucia;[2] and there are every day baboons furiously in love with women. We see also certain male animals that are fond of the males of their own kind. Oppianus[3] and others give us some examples of the reverence that beasts have to their kindred in their copulation,[4] but experience often shows us the contrary:

> "Nec habetur turpe juvencæ
> Ferre patrem tergo; fit equo sua filia conjux;
> Quasque creavit, init pecudes caper, ipsaque cujus
> Semine concepta est, ex illo concepit ales."[5]

For malicious subtlety, can there be a more pregnant example than in the philosopher Thales' mule? He, laden with salt and fording a river, and by accident stumbling there, so that the sacks he carried were all wet, perceiving that by the melting of the salt his burthen was somewhat lighter, never failed, so often as he came to any river to lie down with his load; till his master, discovering the knavery, ordered that he should be laden with wool, wherein finding himself mistaken he ceased to practice that device.[6] There

[1] Plutarch, on the Industry of Animals, c. 17. [2] Idem, ibid.

[3] Poem on Hunting, i. 236.

[4] Of this there is a very remarkable instance, which I met in Varro de Re Rustica, lib. ii. c. 7. "As incredible as it may seem it ought to be remembered, that a stallion refusing absolutely to leap his mother, the groom thought fit to carry him to her with a cloth over his head, which blinded him, and by that means he forced him to cover her; but taking off the veil as soon as he got off her, the stallion furiously rushed upon him and bit him till he killed him."—COSTE.

[5] "The heifer thinks it no shame to take her sire upon her back; the horse his daughter leaps; goats increase the herd by those they have begot; birds of all sorts live in common, and by the seed they were conceived conceive."—OVID, *Metam.*, x. 325.

[6] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 15; Ælian., Hist. Anim., vii. 42.

are several that are the very image of our avarice, for we see them infinitely solicitous to catch all they can and hide it with exceeding great care, though they never make any use of it at all. As to thrift, they surpass us not only in the foresight and laying up and saving for the time to come, but they have moreover a great deal of the science necessary thereto. The ants bring abroad into the sun their grain and seeds to air, refresh, and dry them, when they perceive them to mould and grow musty, lest they should decay and rot. But the caution and foresight they exhibit in gnawing their grains of wheat, surpass all imagination of human prudence: for by reason that the wheat does not always continue sound and dry, but grows soft, thaws and dissolves, as if it were steeped in milk, whilst hastening to germination, for fear lest it should shoot and lose the nature and property of a magazine for their subsistence, they nibble off the end by which it should shoot and sprout.

As to what concerns war, which is the greatest and most pompous of human actions, I would very fain know, whether we would use that for an argument of some prerogative, or, on the contrary, for a testimony of our weakness and imperfection; for, in truth, the science of undoing and killing one another, and of ruining and destroying our own kind, has nothing in it so tempting as to make it coveted by beasts who have it not:

> "Quando leoni
> Fortior eripuit vitam leo? quo nemore unquam
> Expiravit aper majoris dentibus apri?"[1]

yet are they not universally exempt; witness the furious encounters of bees, and the enterprises of the princes of the two opposite armies:

> "Sæpe duobus
> Regibus incessit magno discordia motu;
> Continuoque animos vulgi et trepidantia bello
> Corda licet longe præsciscere."[2]

[1] "What stronger lion ever took the life from a weaker? or in what forest was it ever known that a small boar fell by the teeth of a larger boar."—JUVENAL, xv. 160.

[2] "Often, betwixt two kings, animosities arise with great commotion; then, straight, the common sort are heard from afar, preparing for the war."—VIRGIL, *Georg.*, iv. 67.

I never read this divine description but that, methinks, I there see human folly and vanity represented in their true and lively colours: for these preparations for war that so frighten and astound us with their noise and tumult, this rattle of guns, drums, and confused voices,

> "Fulgur ibi ad cœlum se tollit, totaque circum
> Ære renidescit tellus, subterque virum vi
> Excitur pedibus sonitus, clamoreque montes
> Icti rejectant voces ad sidera mundi;"[1]

in this dreadful embattling of so many thousands of armed men, and so great fury, ardour, and courage, 'tis pleasant to consider by what idle occasions they are excited, and by how light ones appeased;

> "Paridis propter narratur amorem
> Græcia Barbariæ diro collisa duello;"[2]

all Asia was ruined and destroyed for the ungoverned lust of one Paris: the envy of one single man, a despite, a pleasure or a domestic jealousy, causes that ought not to set two oyster wenches by the ears, is the soul and mover of all this mighty bustle. Shall we believe those who are themselves the principal authors of these mischiefs? Let us then hear the greatest and most victorious emperor that ever was making sport of, and with marvellous ingenuity turning into a jest, the many battles fought both by sea and land, the blood and lives of five hundred thousand men that followed his fortune, and the power and riches of two parts of the world, drained for the service of his expeditions;

> "Quod futuit Glaphyran Antonius, hanc mihi pœnam
> Fulvia constituit, se quoque uti futuam.
> Fulviam ego ut futuam? Quid, si me Manius oret
> Pædicem, faciam? Non puto, si sapiam.

[1] "When the glancing ray of arms rises heavenward, and the earth glows with beams of shining brass, and is trampled by horses and by men, and the rocks struck by the various cries reverberate the sounds to the skies."—LUCRETIUS, ii. 325.

[2] "By reason of Paris' love, Greece and the Barbarians engaged in dire warfare."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 2, 6.

> Aut futue, aut pugnemus, ait. Quid, si mihi vita
> Charior est ipsa mentula? Signa canant."[1]

(I use my Latin with the liberty of conscience you are pleased to allow me.) Now this great body, with so many fronts and motions as seem to threaten heaven and earth;

> "Quam multi Lybico volvuntur marmore fluctus,
> Sævus ubi Orion hybernis conditur undis,
> Vel cum sole novo densæ torrentur aristæ,
> Aut Hermi campo, aut Lyciæ flaventibus arvis:
> Scuta sonant, pulsuque pedum tremit excita tellus:"[2]

this furious monster, with so many heads and arms, is yet man, feeble, calamitous, and miserable; 'tis but an ant-hill of ants disturbed and provoked;

> "It nigrum campis agmen:"[3]

a contrary wind, the croaking of a flight of ravens, the stumble of a horse, the casual passage of an eagle, a dream, a voice, a sign, a morning mist, are any one of them sufficient to beat down and overturn him. Dart but a sunbeam in his face, he is melted and vanished: blow but a little dust in his eyes, as our poet says of the bees, and all our

[1] Martial, x. 21. This epigram was composed by Augustus, but the luscious Latin conveys such gross and licentious ideas that there would be no excuse for translating the lines without softening them. The following French version of Fontenelle, in his Dialogues of the dead, lets us entirely into Augustus's meaning:

> "Parce qu' Antoine est charmé de Glaphire,
> Fulvie a ses beaux yeux me veut assujettir.
> Antoine est infidele: Eh bien donc? Est-ce a dire
> Que des fautes d'Antoine on me fera patir?
> Qui? moy? que je serve Fulvie?
> A ce compte on verroit se retirer vers moy
> Mille Epouses mal satisfaites.
> *Aime moi*, me dit elle, *ou combattons.* Mais quoy?
> Elle est bien laide? Allons, sonnez trompettes."—COSTE.

[2] "As the innumerable waves that roll on the Lybian shore, when stormy Orion, winter returning, plunges into the waters; or as the golden ears, scorched by the summer's ray, on Hermus banks or fruitful Lycia, the bright shields dreadfully resound, and as the soldiers march, their footing shakes the ground."—*Æneid*, vii. 718.

[3] "The black troop marches to the field."—VIRGIL, *Æneid*, iv. 404.

standards and legions, with the great Pompey himself at the head of them, are routed and crushed to pieces: for it was he, as I take it,[1] that Sertorius beat in Spain with those brave arms, which also served Eumenes against Antigonus, and Surena against Crassus:

> "Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta,
> Pulveris exigui jactu compressa quiescent."[2]

Let us but slip our flies after them, and even these will have the force and the courage to disperse them. Within recent memory, the Portuguese besieging the city of Tamly, in the territory of Xiatine, the inhabitants of the place brought a number of hives, of which are great plenty in that place, upon the wall, and with fire drove the bees so furiously upon the enemy that they gave over the enterprise and trussed up their baggage, not being able to stand their attacks and stings; and so the city, by this new sort of relief, was freed from the danger with so wonderful a fortune, that at their return it was found that the bees had not lost so much as one combatant.[3] The souls of emperors and cobblers are cast in the same mould; the weight and importance of the actions of princes considered, we persuade ourselves that they must be produced by some as weighty and important causes: but we are deceived; for they are pushed on and pulled back in their movements by the same springs that we are in our little matters: the same reason that makes us wrangle with a neighbour, causes a war betwixt princes; the same reason that makes us whip a lacquey, falling into the hands of a king makes him ruin a whole province. They are as prompt and as easily moved

[1] Here Montaigne had reason to be a little distrustful of his memory; for it was not against Pompey that Sertorius made use of this stratagem, but against the Caracitanians, a people of Spain, who lived in deep caves dug in a rock, where it was impossible to force them.—See Plutarch, Life of Sertorius, cap. 6.

[2] "These commotions of their minds, and this so mighty fray, quashed by the throw of a little dust, will cease."—VIRGIL, *Georgics*, iv. 86.

[3] "Cotton has, "On their return from the pursuit they had not lost so much as one man." But the text has "Au retour du combat il ne s'en trouva *une seule* a dire." Coste jocosely questions how Montaigne could have been in a position to determine this point.

as we, but they are able to do more mischief; in a gnat and an elephant the passion is the same.

As to what concerns fidelity, there is no animal in the world so treacherous as man. Our histories have recorded the eager pursuit that dogs have made after the murderers of their masters. King Pyrrhus, observing a dog that watched a dead man's body, and understanding that he had for three days together performed that office, commanded that the body should be buried, and took the dog along with him. One day, as he was at a general muster of his army, this dog saw his master's murderers, and with great barking and extreme signs of anger flew upon them, by this first accusation awaking the revenge of this murder, which was soon after perfected by form of justice.[1] As much was done by the dog of the sage Hesiod, which convicted the sons of Ganyctor of Naupactus of the murder committed on the person of his master.[2] Another dog, put to guard a temple at Athens, having spied a sacrilegious thief who carried away the finest jewels, fell to barking at him with all the force he had; but, the warders not awaking at the noise, he followed him, and, day being broken, kept off at a short distance, without losing sight of him; if he offered him anything to eat, he would not take it, but would wag his tail at all the passengers he met, and took whatever they gave him at their hands; and if the thief laid down to sleep, he likewise stayed upon the spot. The news of this dog having come to the warders of the temple, they put themselves upon the pursuit, inquiring as to the colour of the dog, and at last found him in the city of Cromyon, and the thief also, whom they brought back to Athens, where he had his reward: and the judges taking cognizance of this good office, ordered a certain measure of corn for the dog's daily sustenance, at the public charge, and the priests to take care to it. Plutarch[3] delivers this story for a most certain truth, and as one that happened in the age wherein he lived.

As to gratitude (for it seems to me, we had need bring this word into a little greater repute) this one example,

[1] Plutarch on the Industry of Animals, c. 12.
[2] Idem, ibid.
[3] *Ubi supra*, c. 12.

which Apion[1] reports himself to have been an eyewitness of, shall suffice. "One day," says he, "that at Rome they entertained the people with the fighting of several strange beasts, and principally of lions of an unusual size, there was one amongst the rest who, by his furious deportment, by the strength and largeness of his limbs, and by his loud and dreadful roaring, attracted the eyes of all the spectators. Amongst the other slaves, that were presented to the people in this combat of beasts, there was one Androclus, of Dacia, belonging to a Roman lord of consular dignity. This lion, having seen him at a distance, first made a sudden stop, as it were, in a wondering posture, and then softly approached nearer in a gentle and peaceable manner, as if it were to enter into acquaintance with him; this being done, and being now assured of what he sought, he began to wag his tail, as dogs do when they flatter their masters, and to kiss and lick the hands and thighs of the poor wretch, who was beside himself and almost dead with fear. Androclus having, by this kindness of the lion, a little come to himself, and having taken so much heart as to consider and recognize him, it was a singular pleasure to see the joy and caresses that passed betwixt them. At which the people breaking into loud acclamations of joy, the emperor caused the slave to be called, to know from him the cause of so strange an event. He thereupon told him a new and a very wonderful story: my master, said he, being proconsul in Africa, I was constrained by his severity and cruel usage, being daily beaten, to steal from him and to run away. And to hide myself securely from a person of so great authority in the province, I thought it my best way to fly to the solitudes, sands, and uninhabi-

[1] Aulus Gellius (lib. v. c. 14) has transmitted this story to us, on the credit of Apion: a learned man, says he, but whose great ostentation renders him, perhaps, too verbose in the narration of things, which he says he had heard or read: as to this fact, Apion relates, that he was an eyewitness of it at Rome; and Seneca (lib. ii. cap. 19) confirms it, in some measure, by these few words, Leonem in amphitheatro spectavimus qui unum e bestiariis agnitum, quum quondam ejus fuisset magister, protexit ab impetu bestiarum. "We saw a lion in the amphitheatre, who, finding a man there condemned to fight with the beasts, who had formerly been his master, protected him from the fury of the other beasts."

table parts of that country, resolved, in case the means of supporting life should fail me, to make some shift or other to kill myself. The sun being excessively hot at noon, and the heat intolerable, I found a retired and almost inaccessible cave, and went into it. Soon after there came in to me this lion with one foot wounded and bloody, complaining and groaning with the pain he endured: at his coming I was exceedingly afraid, but he having espied me hid in a corner of his den, came gently to me, holding out and showing me his wounded foot, as if he demanded my assistance in his distress. I then drew out a great splinter he had got there, and growing a little more familiar with him, squeezing the wound, thrust out the dirt and gravel that he had got into it, wiped and cleansed it as well as I could. He, finding himself something better and much eased of his pain, lay down to repose, and presently fell asleep with his foot in my hand. From that time forward, he and I lived together in this cave three whole years, upon the same diet; for of the beasts that he killed in hunting he always brought me the best pieces, which I roasted in the sun for want of fire, and so ate them. At last growing weary of this wild and brutish life, the lion being one day gone abroad to hunt for our ordinary provision, I escaped from thence, and the third day after was taken by the soldiers, who brought me from Africa to this city to my master, who presently condemned me to die, and to be exposed to the wild beasts. Now, by what I see, this lion was also taken soon after, who would now recompense me for the benefit and cure that he had received at my hands." This is the story that Androclus told the emperor, which he also conveyed from hand to hand to the people: wherefore at the universal request, he was absolved from his sentence and set at liberty; and the lion was, by order of the people, presented to him. We afterwards saw, says Apion, Androclus leading this lion, in nothing but a small leash, from tavern to tavern at Rome, and receiving what money everybody would give him, the lion being so gentle, as to suffer himself to be covered with the flowers that the people threw upon him, everyone that met him: saying There goes the lion that entertained the man, there goes the man that cured the lion.

We often lament the loss of the beasts we love, and so do they the loss of us:

> "Post, bellator equus, positis insignibus, Æthon
> It lacrymans, guttisque humectat grandibus ora."[1]

As some nations have wives in common, and some others have every man his own: is not the same evident amongst beasts, and marriages better kept than ours? As to the society and confederation they make amongst themselves, to league themselves together, and to give one another mutual assistance, is it not manifest that oxen, hogs, and other animals, at the cry of any of their kind that we offend, all the herd run to his aid, and embody for his defence? When the fish scarus has swallowed the angler's hook, his fellows all crowd about him, and gnaw the line in pieces; and if by chance one be got into the net, the others present him their tails on the outside, which he holding fast with his teeth, they after that manner disengage and draw him out.[2] Mullets, when one of their companions is engaged, cross the line over their back, and with a fin they have there, indented like a saw, cut and saw it asunder.[3] As to the particular offices that we receive from one another for the service of life, there are several like examples amongst them. 'Tis said that the whale never moves that he has not always before him a little fish, like the sea-gudgeon, for this reason called the guide-fish, whom the whale follows, suffering himself to be led and turned with as great facility as the helm guides the ship: in recompense of which service, whereas all other things, whether beast or vessel, that enter into the dreadful gulf of this monster's mouth, are immediately lost and swallowed up, this little fish retires into it in great security, and there sleeps, during which time the whale never stirs; but as soon as it goes out, he immediately follows: and if by accident he lose sight of his little guide, he goes wandering here and there, and strikes his sides against the rocks, like a ship that has lost her rudder; which Plutarch[4] testifies to have seen off the Island of Anticyra. There is a like society betwixt the

[1] "Next, Æthon his warhorse came, without any of his trappings, and weeping with heavy tears."—*Æneid*, xi. 89.
[2] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 26. [3] Idem, ibid. [4] Idem, ibid.

little bird called the wren and the crocodile; the wren serves for a sentinel over this great animal; and if the ichneumon, his mortal enemy, approach to fight him, this little bird, for fear lest he should surprise him asleep, both with his voice and bill rouses him and gives him notice of his danger: he feeds on this monster's leavings, who receives him familiarly into his mouth, suffering him to peck into his jaws and betwixt his teeth, and thence to take out the bits of flesh that remain; and when he has a mind to shut his mouth he gives the bird warning to go out, by closing it by little and little, without bruising or doing it any harm at all.[1] The shellfish called naker[2] lives also in the same intelligence with the shrimp, a little animal of the lobster kind, serving him in the nature of usher and porter, sitting at the opening of the shell which the naker keeps always gaping and open, till the shrimp sees some little fish proper for their prey within the hollow of the shell, and then it enters too, and pinches the naker to the quick, so that she is forced to close her shell, where they two together devour the prey they have trapped into their fort.[3] In the manner of living of the Tunnies, we observe a singular knowledge of the three parts of mathematics: as to astrology, they teach it to men, for they stay in the place where they are surprised by the Brumal Solstice, and never stir thence till the next Equinox; for which reason Aristotle himself attributes to them this science; as to geometry and arithmetic, they always form their array in the figure of a cube, every way square, and make up the body of a battalion, solid, close, and environed with six equal sides; so that swimming in this square order, as large behind as before, whoever in seeing them can count one rank, may easily number the whole troop, by reason that the depth is equal to the breadth, and the breadth to the length.[4]

As to magnanimity, it will be hard to give a better instance of this than in the example of the great dog, sent to Alexander the Great from India. They first brought him a stag to encounter, next a boar, and after that a bear; all these he slighted, and disdained to stir from his place;

[1] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 26. [2] The mother of pearl oyster.
[3] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 26, and Cicero, De Natura Deor., ii. 49.
[4] Plutarch, *ubi supra*.

but when he saw a lion he immediately roused himself, evidently manifesting that he declared that alone worthy to enter the lists with him.[1] As to what concerns repentance and the acknowledgment of faults, 'tis reported of an elephant, that having, in the impetuosity of his rage, killed his keeper, he fell into so extreme a sorrow that he would never after eat, but starved himself to death.[2] And as to clemency, 'tis said of a tiger, the most inhuman of all beasts, that a kid having been put into him, he suffered two days' hunger rather than hurt it, and on the third broke the cage he was shut up in, to go seek elsewhere for prey, not choosing to fall upon the kid, his friend and guest.[3] And as to the laws of familiarity and agreement, formed by converse, it commonly occurs that we bring up cats, dogs, and hares tame together.

But that which seamen experimentally know, and particularly in the Sicilian sea, of the quality of the halcyons, surpasses all human thought: of what kind of animal has nature so highly honoured the hatching, birth, and production? The poets, indeed, say that the Island of Delos, which before was a floating island, was fixed for the service of Latona's lying-in; but the gods ordered that the whole ocean should be stayed, made stable and smoothed, without waves, without wind or rain, whilst the halcyon lays her eggs, which is just about the Solstice, the shortest day of the year, so that, by this halcyon's privilege, we have seven days and seven nights in the very heart of winter, wherein we may sail without danger. Their females never have to do with any other male but their own, whom they always accompany (without ever forsaking him) all their lives; if he happen to be weak and broken with age, they take him upon their shoulders, carry him from place to place, and serve him till death. But the most inquisitive into the secrets of nature could never yet arrive at a knowledge of the marvellous fabric wherewith the halcyon builds the nest for her little ones, nor guess at the matter. Plutarch,[4] who had seen and handled many of them, thinks it is the bones of some fish which she joins and binds together, interlacing

[1] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 14.
[2] Arrian, Hist. Indic., c. 14.
[3] Plutarch, *ubi supra*, c. 15.
[4] *Ubi supra.*

them some lengthwise and others across, and adding ribs and hoops in such manner that she forms, at last, a round vessel fit to launch, which being done, and the building finished, she carries it to the wash of the beach, where the sea beating gently against it, shows her where she is to mend what is not well jointed and knit, and where better to fortify the seams that are leaky and that open at the waves; and, on the contrary, what is well built and has had the due finishing, the beating of the waves so closes and binds together that it is not to be broken or cracked by blows, either of stone or iron, without very much ado. And that which is still more to be admired is the proportion and figure of the cavity within, which is composed and proportioned after such a manner as not possibly to receive or admit any other thing than the bird that built it; for to anything else it is so impenetrable, close and shut, that nothing can enter, not so much as the water of the sea. This is a very clear description of this building, and borrowed from a very good hand; and yet methinks it does not give us sufficient light into the difficulty of this architecture. Now, from what vanity can it proceed to place lower than ourselves, and disdainfully to interpret effects that we can neither imitate nor comprehend?

To pursue a little further this equality and correspondence betwixt us and beasts: the privilege our soul so much glorifies herself upon of bringing all things she conceives to her own condition, of stripping all things that come to her of their mortal and corporal qualities, of ordering and placing the things she conceives worthy her taking notice of, divesting them of their corruptible qualities, and making them lay aside length, breadth, depth, weight, colour, smell, roughness, smoothness, hardness, softness, and all sensible incidents, as mean and superfluous vestments, to accommodate them to her own immortal and spiritual condition: the Paris, just as Rome and Paris, that I have in my soul, the Paris that I imagine, I imagine and conceive it without greatness and without place, without stone, without plaster, without wood: this very same privilege, I say, seems to be evidently in beasts: for a horse, accustomed to trumpets, the rattle of musket-shot and the bustle of battles, whom we see start and tremble

in his sleep stretched upon his litter, as if he were in fight, it is certain that he conceives in his soul the beat of drum without noise, an army without arms, and without body:

> "Quippe videbis equos fortes, cum membra jacebunt
> In somnis, sudare tamen, spirareque sæpe,
> Et quasi de palma summas contendere vires."[1]

The hare that a greyhound imagines in his sleep, after which we see him so pant whilst he sleeps, so stretch out his tail, shake his legs, and perfectly represent all the motions of a course, is a hare without skin and without bones:

> "Venantumque canes in molli sæpe quiete
> Jactant crura tamen subito, vocesque repente
> Mittunt, et crebras reducunt naribus auras,
> Ut vestigia si teneant inventa ferarum:
> Expergefactique sequuntur inania sæpe
> Cervorum simulacra, fugæ quasi dedita cernant;
> Donec discussis redeant erroribus ad se."[2]

We often observe the bandogs snarl in their dreams and afterwards bark out, and start up on a sudden, as if they perceived some stranger at hand: this stranger, that their soul discerns, is a spiritual and imperceptible man, without dimension, without colour, and without being:

> "Consueta domi catulorum blanda propago
> Degere, sæpe levem ex oculis volucremque soporem
> Discutere, et corpus de terra corripere instant,
> Proinde quasi ignotas facies atque ora tuantur."[3]

As to beauty of the body, before I proceed any further, I would know whether or not we are agreed about the description. 'Tis likely we do not well know what beauty is

[1] "You shall see strong horses in their sleep, sweat and snort, and seem as if, with all their force, they were striving to win the race."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 988.

[2] "Hounds often in their quiet rest suddenly throw out their legs and bark, and breathe quick and short, as if they were in full chase upon a burning scent: nay, being waked, pursue imagined stags, as if they had them in real view, till at last, discovering the mistake, they return to themselves."—*Idem, ibid.*, 992.

[3] "Often our caressing house-dogs, shaking slumber from their eyes, will rise up suddenly, as if they saw strange faces."—*Idem, ibid.*, 999.

in nature and in general, since to human and our own beauty we give so many diverse forms, of which were there any natural rule and prescription we should know it in common, as we do the heat of the fire. But we fancy its forms according to our own appetite and liking:

"Turpis Romano Belgicus ore color."[1]

Indians paint it black and tawny, with great swollen lips, big flat noses, and load the cartilage betwixt the nostrils with great rings of gold to make it hang down to the mouth; as also the nether lip with great hoops, enriched with jewels, that weigh them down to fall upon the chin, it being with them a special grace to show their teeth even below the roots. In Peru, the greatest ears are the most beautiful, and they stretch them out as far as they can by art; and a man, now living, says that he has seen in an eastern nation this care of enlarging them in so great repute, and the ear laden with such ponderous jewels, that he did with great ease put his arm, sleeve and all, through the bore of an ear. There are, elsewhere, nations that take great care to blacken their teeth, and hate to see them white; elsewhere, people that paint them red. Not only in Biscay, but in other places, the women are reputed more beautiful for having their heads shaved, and, this, moreover, in certain frozen countries, as Pliny reports.[2] The Mexicans esteem a low forehead a great beauty, and though they shave all other parts they nourish hair on the forehead and increase it by art; and have great breasts in such reputation, that they make boast to give their children suck over their shoulders: we should paint deformity so. The Italians fashion beauty gross and massive; the Spaniards, gaunt and slender; and among us, one makes it white, another brown; one soft and delicate, another strong and vigorous; one will have his mistress soft and gentle, another haughty and majestic. Just as the preference in beauty is given by Plato to the spherical figure, the Epicureans give it to the pyramidal or the square, and cannot

[1] "The Belgic complexion of a German lass ill becomes a Roman face."—PROPERTIUS, ii. 17, 26.

[2] Book vi. c. 13.

swallow a god in the form of a ball.[1] But, be it how it will, nature has no more privileged us above her common laws in this than in the rest; and if we will judge ourselves aright, we shall find that if there be some animals less favoured in this than we, there are others, and in great number, that are more so, "a multis animalibus decore vincimur;[2] even of our terrestrial compatriots; for, as to those of the sea, setting the figure aside, which cannot fall into any manner of comparison, being so wholly another thing, in colour, cleanness, smoothness, and disposition, we sufficiently give place to them; and no less in all qualities, to the aerial. And this prerogative that the poets make such a mighty matter of, our erect stature, looking towards heaven, our original,

> "Pronaque cum spectent animalia cætera terram,
> Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri
> Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus,"[3]

is merely poetical; for there are several little beasts that have their sight absolutely turned towards heaven; and I find the countenance of camels and ostriches much higher raised, and more erect than ours. What animals have not their faces forward and in front, and do not look just as we do, and do not in their natural posture discover as much of heaven and earth as man? And what qualities of our bodily constitution, in Plato and Cicero, may not indifferently serve a thousand sorts of beasts? Those that most resemble us, are the ugliest and most abject of all the herd; for, as to outward appearance and form of visage, such are the baboons and monkeys:

> "Simia quam similis, turpissima bestia, nobis?"[4]

and, for the internal and vital parts, the hog. In earnest, when I imagine man stark naked, even that sex that seems to have the greatest share of beauty, his defects, natural subjections, and imperfections, I find that we have more

[1] Plato, Timæus.

[2] "Many animals surpass us in beauty."—SENECA, *Epist.*, 124.

[3] "Whereas other animals bow their prone looks to the earth, he gave it to men to look erect, to behold the heavenly arch."—OVID, *Met.*, i. 84.

[4] "How like to man is that most beastly of all beasts, the ape?"—ENNIUS, *ap.* Cicero, *Nat. Deor.*, lib. i.

reason than any other animal to cover ourselves. We are readily to be excused for borrowing of those creatures to which nature has in this been kinder than to us, to trick ourselves with their beauties and hide ourselves under their spoils—their wool, feathers, hair, silk. Let us observe, as to the rest, that man is the sole animal whose nudities offend his own companions, and the only one who, in his natural actions, withdraws and hides himself from his own kind. And really, 'tis also an effect worth consideration, that they, who are masters in the trade, prescribe as a remedy for amorous passions the full and free view of the body a man desires; so that, to cool his ardour, there needs no more but at full liberty to see and contemplate what he loves:

> "Ille quod obscœnas in aperto corpore partes
> Viderat, in cursu qui fuit, hæsit amor:"[1]

and although this recipe may, peradventure, proceed from a refined and cold humour, it is, notwithstanding, a very great sign of our weakness, that use and acquaintance should disgust us with one another.

It is not modesty so much as cunning and prudence, that makes our ladies so circumspect in refusing us admittance to their closets, before they are painted and tricked up for public view:

> "Nec Veneres nostras hoc fallit; quo magis ipsæ
> Omnia summopere hos vitæ postscenia celant,
> Quos retinere volunt, adstrictoque esse in amore:"[2]

whereas in several animals there is nothing that we do not love, and that does not please our senses; so that from their very excrements we not only extract wherewith to heighten our sauces, but also our richest ornaments and perfumes. This discourse reflects upon none but the ordinary sort of women, and is not so sacrilegious as to seek to comprehend those divine, supernatural, and extraordinary beauties, whom we occasionally see shining amongst us like stars under a corporeal and terrestrial veil.

[1] "He that in full ardour has disclosed to him the secret parts of his mistress in open view, flags in his hot career."—OVID, *De Rem. Amor.*, v. 429.

[2] "Of this our ladies are well aware; and it makes them with such care behind the scenes remove all those defects that may check the flame of their lovers."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 1182.

As to the rest, the very share that we allow to beasts of the bounty of nature, by our own confession, is very much to their advantage; we attribute to ourselves imaginary and fantastic goods, future and absent goods, for which human capacity cannot, of herself, be responsible: or goods that we falsely attribute to ourselves by the licence of opinion, as reason, knowledge and honour; and leave to them, for their share, essential, manageable and palpable goods, as peace, repose, security, innocence and health; health, I say, the fairest and richest present that nature can make us. Insomuch that philosophy, even the Stoic,[1] is so bold as to say that Heraclitus and Pherecides could they have exchanged their wisdom for health, and have delivered themselves, the one of his dropsy and the other of the lice disease that tormented him, by the bargain, they had done well. By which they set a still greater value upon wisdom, comparing and putting it in the balance with health, than they do in this other proposition, which is also theirs: they say that if Circe had presented to Ulysses two potions, the one to make a fool become a wise man, and the other to make a wise man become a fool, Ulysses ought rather to have chosen the last than to consent that Circe should change his human figure into that of a beast; and say that wisdom itself would have spoken to him after this manner: "Forsake me, let me alone, rather than lodge me under the body and figure of an ass." How, then, will the philosophers abandon this great and divine wisdom for this corporal and terrestrial covering? it is then not by reason, by discourse, by the soul, that we excel beasts: 'tis by our beauty, our fair complexion, our fine symmetry of parts, for which we must quit our intelligence, our prudence and all the rest. Well, I accept this frank and free confession: certainly, they knew that those parts upon which we so much value ourselves are no other than vain fancy. If beasts, then, had all the virtue knowledge, wisdom, and Stoical perfection, they would still be beasts, and would not be comparable to man, miserable, wicked, insensate man. For, in fine, whatever is not as we are is nothing worth; and God Himself to procure esteem amongst us must put Himself into that shape, as we shall

[1] Plutarch, On the Common Conceptions against the Stoics, c. 8.

show anon: by which it appears that it is not upon any true ground of reason, but by a foolish pride and vain opinion that we prefer ourselves before other animals, and separate ourselves from their condition and society.

But, to return to what I was upon before, we have for our part inconstancy, irresolution, incertitude, sorrow, superstition, solicitude about things to come even after we shall be no more, ambition, avarice, jealousy, envy, irregular, frantic and untamable appetites, war, lying, disloyalty, detraction, and curiosity. Doubtless, we have strangely overpaid this fine reason upon which we so much glorify ourselves, and this capacity of judging and knowing, if we have brought it at the price of this infinite number of passions to which we are eternally subject: unless we shall yet think fit, as Socrates does,[1] to add this notable prerogative above beasts, that whereas nature has prescribed to them certain seasons and limits for the delights of Venus, she has given us the reins at all hours, and all seasons. "Ut vinum ægrotis, quia prodest raro, nocet sæpissime, melius est non adhibere omnino, quam, spe dubiæ salutis, in apertam perniciem incurrere: sic haud scio, an melius fuerit humano generi motum istum celerum cogitationis, acumen, solertiam, quam rationem vocamus, quoniam pestifera sint multis, admodum paucis salutaria, non dari omnino, quam tam munifice et tam large dari"[2] Of what advantage can we conceive the knowledge of so many things was to Varro and Aristotle? Did it exempt them from human inconveniences? Were they by it freed from the accidents that lie heavy upon the shoulders of a porter? Did they extract from their logic any consolation for the gout? or, from knowing that this humour is lodged in the joints, did they feel it the less? Did they enter into com-

[1] Xenophon, Mem. on Socrates, i. 4, 12.

[2] "As it falls out that wine often hurts the sick, and very rarely does them good, it is better not to give them any at all than to run into a manifest danger, out of hope of an uncertain benefit: so I know not whether it had not been better for mankind that this quick motion, this penetration of imagination, this subtlety, that we call reason, had not been given to man at all; considering how pestiferous it is to many, and healthful but to few, than to have been conferred in so abundant manner, and with so liberal a hand."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, iii. 27.

position with death by knowing that some nations rejoice at his approach? or with cuckoldry, by knowing that in some part of the world wives are in common? On the contrary, having been reputed the greatest men for knowledge, the one amongst the Romans and the other amongst the Greeks, and in a time when learning most flourished, we have not heard, nevertheless, that they had any particular excellence in their lives: nay, the Greek had enough to do to clear himself from some notable blemishes in his. Have we observed that pleasure and health have had a better relish with him who understands astrology and grammar than with others?

"Illiterati num minus nervi rigent?"[1]

and shame and poverty less troublesome?

"Scilicet et morbis, et debilitate carebis,
Et luctum et curam effugies, et tempora vitæ
Longa tibi post hæc fato meliore dabuntur."[2]

I have known in my time a hundred artizans, a hundred labourers, wiser and more happy than the rectors of the university, and whom I had much rather have resembled. Learning, methinks, has its place amongst the necessary things of life, as glory, nobility, dignity, or, at the most, as beauty, riches, and such other qualities, which, indeed are useful to it; but remotely, and more by fantasy than by nature. We need scarcely more offices, rules, and laws of living in our society than cranes and emmets do in theirs; and yet we see that these carry themselves very regularly without erudition. If man were wise, he would take the true value of everything according as it was most useful and proper to his life. Whoever will number us by our actions and deportments, will find many more excellent men amongst the ignorant than among the learned: ay, in all sorts of virtue. The old Rome seems to me to have been of much greater value, both for peace and war, than that

[1] "The ploughman is as fit for Venus' service as his master."—HORATIUS, *Epod.*, VIII. v. 17.

[2] "Thou shall be free from disease and infirmity, and avoid care and sorrow; and thy life shall be prolonged, and with better days."—JUVENAL, XIV. 156.

learned Rome that ruined itself; and though all the rest should be equal, yet integrity and innocence would remain to the ancients, for they inhabit singularly well with simplicity. But I will leave this discourse that would lead me farther than I am willing to follow; and shall only say this farther: 'tis only humility and submission that can make a complete good man. We are not to leave to each man's own judgment the knowledge of his duty; we are to prescribe it to him, and not suffer him to choose it at his own discretion: otherwise, according to the imbecility and infinite variety of our reasons and opinions, we should at last forge for ourselves duties that would (as Epicurus[1] says) enjoin us to eat one another.

The first law that ever God gave to man was a law of pure obedience: it was a commandment naked and simple, wherein man had nothing to inquire after or to dispute, forasmuch as to obey is the proper office of a rational soul, acknowledging a heavenly superior and benefactor. From obedience and submission spring all other virtues, as all sin does from self-opinion. And, on the contrary, the first temptation that by the devil was offered to human nature, its first poison, insinuated itself by the promises that were made to us of knowledge and wisdom: "Eritis sicut dii, scientes bonum et malum."[2] And the Sirens, in Homer,[3] to allure Ulysses and draw him within the danger of their snares offered to give him knowledge. The plague of man is the opinion of wisdom; and for this reason it is that ignorance is so recommended to us by our religion, as proper to faith and obedience: "Cavete, ne quis vos decipiat per philosophiam et inanes seductiones, secundum elementa mundi."[4] There is in this a general consent amongst all sects of philosophers, that the sovereign good consists in the tranquillity of the soul and body: but where shall we find it?

[1] Or rather, the Epicurean Colotes.

[2] "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."—*Genesis* iii. 5.

[3] Odyssey, xii. 188.

[4] "Take heed lest any man deceive you by philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and the rudiments of the world."—ST. PAUL, *Colossians* ii. 8.

"Ad summam, sapiens uno minor est Jove, dives,
Liber, honoratus, pulcher, rex denique regum;
Præcipue sanus, nisi cum pituita molesta est." [1]

It seems, in truth, that nature, for the consolation of our miserable and wretched state, has only given us presumption for our inheritance; 'tis, as Epictetus says,[2] "that man has nothing properly his own, but the use of his opinions;" we have nothing but wind and smoke for our portion. The gods have health in essence, says philosophy, and sickness in intelligence; man, on the contrary, possesses his goods by fancy, his ills in essence. We have had reason to magnify the power of our imagination, for all our goods are only in dream. Hear this poor calamitous animal huff: "there is nothing," says Cicero, "so charming as the occupation of letters; of those letters, I say, by means whereof the infinity of things, the immense grandeur of nature, the heavens, even in this world, the earth, and the seas are discovered to us. 'Tis they that have taught us religion, moderation, the grandeur of courage, and that have rescued our souls from obscurity, to make her see all things, high, low, first, middle, last, and 'tis they that furnish us wherewith to live happily and well, and conduct us to pass over our lives without displeasure and without offence." [3] Does not this man seem to speak of the condition of the ever-living and almighty God? Yet, as to the effect, a thousand little country-women have lived lives more equal, more sweet and constant than his.

"Deus ille fuit, deus, inclute Memmi,
Qui princeps vitæ rationem invenit eam, quæ
Nunc appellatur sapientia; quique per artem
Fluctibus e tantis vitam, tantisque tenebris,
In tam tranquilla et tam clara luce locavit:" [4]

here are very fine, very brave words; but a very light

[1] "He that is wise is inferior to none but Jove alone; honoured, rich, free, fair, in short, a king of kings; and in capital health, unless when he has a cold."—HORATIUS, *Ep.* i. 1. 106.

[2] Manual, c. ii.

[3] Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., i. 26.

[4] "That god, great Memmius, was a god indeed, who first found out that *rationale* of life which is now called wisdom; and who by such art removed life from its tempests and darkness into so calm and clear a light."—LUCRETIUS, v. 8.

accident put this same man's understanding in a worse condition than that of the meanest shepherd,[1] notwithstanding this instructing God, this divine wisdom. Of the same stamp of impudence is the promise of Democritus's book, "I am going to speak of all things;"[2] and that foolish title that Aristotle prefixes to one of his, "of the mortal gods,"[3] and the judgment of Chrysippus, "that Dion was as virtuous as God;"[4] and my friend Seneca does, indeed, acknowledge that God has given him life, but that to live well is his own; conformably with this other, "In virtute vere gloriamur; quod non contingeret, si id donum a Deo, non a nobis, haberemus;"[5] this is also Seneca's saying, "That the wise man has fortitude equal with God; but in human frailty, wherein he surpasses Him."[6] There is nothing so ordinary as to meet with sallies of the like temerity; there is none of us who takes so much offence to see himself equalled to God, as he does to see himself undervalued by being ranked with other animals; so much more are we jealous of our own interest, than of that of our Creator. But we must trample under foot this foolish vanity, and briskly and boldly shake the ridiculous foundations upon which these false opinions are based. So long as man shall believe he has any means and power of himself, he will never acknowledge what he owes to his Master, his eggs shall always be chickens, as the saying is: we must therefore strip him to his shirt. Let us see some notable example of the effect of his philosophy: Posidonius, being tormented with a disease so painful as made him writhe his arms and gnash his teeth, thought he

[1] "This was Lucretius who, in the verses preceding this period, speaks so pompously of Epicurus and his doctrine: for a love potion that was given him either by his wife or his mistress, so much disturbed his reason, that the violence of his disorder only afforded him a few lucid intervals, which he employed in composing his book, and at last made him kill himself. Eusebius's Chronicon." —COSTE.

[2] Cicero, Acad., ii. 23.

[3] Idem, De Finibus, ii. 13.

[4] Plutarch, On the Common Conceptions of the Stoics.

[5] "We truly glory in our virtue, which would not be if it was given us of God and not by ourselves."—CICERO, *de Nat. Deor.*, iii. 36.

[6] Ep. 53, *sub fin.*

sufficiently baffled the pain by crying out against it: "Thou dost exercise thy malice to much purpose; I will not confess that thou art an evil."[1] He is as sensible of the pain as my footman, but he mightily values himself upon bridling his tongue, at least, and restraining it within the laws of his sect: "re succumbere non oportebat, verbis gloriantem."[2] Arcesilaus, being ill of the gout, and Carneades coming to see him, was returning, troubled at his condition; the other calling back and showing him his feet and then his breast: "There is nothing come from these hither,"[3] said he. This has somewhat a better grace, for he feels himself in pain and would be disengaged from it; but his heart, notwithstanding, is not conquered or enfeebled by it; the other stands more obstinately to his work, but, I fear, rather verbally than really. And Dionysius Heracleotes, afflicted with a vehement smarting in his eyes, was reduced to quit these stoical resolutions.[4] But, though knowledge could in effect do, as they say, and could blunt the point and dull the edge of the misfortunes that attend us, what does she more than what ignorance does more simply and evidently? The philosopher Pyrrho, being at sea in very great danger by reason of a mighty storm, presented nothing to those who were with him to imitate in this extremity but the security of a hog they had on board, that was looking at the tempest quite unconcerned.[5] Philosophy, when she has said all she can, refers us at last to the example of a wrestler or a muleteer, in which sort of people we commonly observe much less apprehension of death or sense of pain and other infirmities, and more endurance, than ever knowledge furnished any one with who was not born to those infirmities, and of himself prepared for them by a natural habit.[6] What is

[1] Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., ii. 25.

[2] "It did not become him that spoke so big, to confess his frailty when he came to the test."—*Idem, ibid.* ii. 13.

[3] Cicero, De Finibus, v. 31.

[4] Idem, ibid. "Cicero says elsewhere (Tusc. Quæs., ii. 25), that this philosopher, having a disorder in his kidneys, exclaimed aloud, that the notion which he had before conceived of pain was false."—COSTE.

[5] "A previous knowledge of evils rather sharpens than modifies the sense of them."—ED. of 1588.

[6] Diogenes Laertius, ix. 69.

the cause that we make incisions and cut the tender limbs of an infant, and those of a horse, more easily than our own, but ignorance only? How many has mere force of imagination made ill. We often see men cause themselves to be let blood, purged, and physicked, to be cured of diseases they only feel in opinion. When real infirmities fail us, knowledge lends us hers: that colour, this complexion, portends some catarrhous defluxion; this hot season threatens us with a fever: this breach in the lifeline of your left hand gives you notice of some near and notable indisposition: and at last it roundly attacks health itself, saying, this sprightliness and vigour of youth cannot continue in this posture, there must be blood taken, and the fever abated, lest it turn to your prejudice. Compare the life of a man subject to such imaginations with that of a labourer who suffers himself to be led by his natural appetite, measuring things only by the present sense, without knowledge and without prognostics—who is only ill when he is ill; whereas the other has the stone in his soul before he has it in his bladder; as if it were not time enough to suffer evil when it shall come, he must anticipate it by fancy and run to meet it. What I say of physic may generally serve as example in other sciences: and hence is derived that ancient opinion of the philosophers,[1] who placed the sovereign good, in discerning the weakness of our judgment. My ignorance affords me as much occasion of hope as of fear; and having no other rule of my health than that of the examples of others, and of events I see elsewhere upon the like occasion, I find of all sorts, and rely upon the comparisons that are most favourable to me. I receive health with open arms, free, full, and entire, and by so much the more whet my appetite to enjoy it, by how much it is at present less ordinary and more rare: so far am I from troubling its repose and sweetness, with the bitterness of a new and constrained manner of living. Beasts sufficiently show us how much the agitation of the soul brings infirmities and diseases upon us. That which is told us of the people of Brazil that they never die but of old age, is attributed to the serenity and tranquillity of the air

[1] The Sceptics.

they live in; but I attribute it to the serenity and tranquillity of their soul, free from all passion, thought, or employments, continuous or unpleasing, as people that pass over their lives in an admirable simplicity and ignorance, without letters, without law, without king, or any manner of religion. Whence comes this which we find by experience, that the coarsest and most rough-hewn clowns are the most able and the most to be desired in amorous performances, and that the love of a muleteer often renders itself more acceptable than that of a gentleman, if it be not, that the agitation of the soul in the latter disturbs his corporal ability, dissolves and tires it, as it also troubles and tires itself? What more usually puts the soul beside herself, and throws her into madness, than her own promptness, vigour, and agility—in short, her own proper force? Of what is the most subtle folly made, but of the most subtle wisdom? As great friendships spring from great enmities, and vigorous healths from mortal diseases: so from the rare and quick agitations of our souls, proceed the most wonderful and wildest frenzies; 'tis but a half turn of the toe from the one to the other.[1] In the actions of madmen, we see how nearly madness resembles the most vigorous operations of the soul. Who does not know how indiscernible the difference is betwixt madness and the gay flights of a sprightly soul, and the effects of a supreme and extraordinary virtue? Plato says, that melancholic persons are the most capable of discipline and the most excellent; nor, indeed, is there in any so great a propension to madness. Infinite wits are ruined by their own proper force and vivacity: what a condition, through his own agitation and promptness of fancy, is one of the most judicious, ingenious, and best formed to the ancient and true poesy, of any of the Italian poets[2] lately fallen into! Has he not great obligation to this vivacity that has destroyed him, to this light that has blinded him? to this exact and subtle apprehension of reason, that has put him beside his reason? to his close and laborious search after science, that has reduced him to stupidity? to that rare aptitude to the exercises of

[1] "Great wits to madness, sure, are near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide."—DRYDEN.

[2] Tasso.

the soul, that has rendered him without exercise and without soul? I was more angry, if possible, than compassionate, to see him at Ferrara[1] in so pitiful a condition surviving himself, forgetting both himself and his works which, without his knowledge, though before his face, have been published, deformed and incorrect.

Would you have a man sound, would you have him regular, and in a steady and secure posture? muffle him up in the shades of stupidity and sloth. We must be made beasts to be made wise, and hookwinked before we can govern ourselves. And if one shall tell me that the advantage of having a cold and blunted sense of pain and other evils, brings this disadvantage along with it, to render us, consequently, less eager and sensible also in the fruition of goods and pleasures; this is true: but the misery of our condition is such that we have not so much to enjoy as to avoid, and that the extremest pleasure does not affect us to the degree that a light grief does: "segnius homines bona quam mala sentiunt."[2] We are not so sensible of the most perfect health, as we are of the least sickness:

> "Pungit
> In cute vix summa violatum plagula corpus;
> Quando valere nihil quemquam movet. Hoc juvat unum
> Quod me non torquet latus, aut pes: cætera quisquam
> Vix queat aut sanum sese, aut sentire valentem."[3]

Our well-being is nothing but the privation of ill-being: and this is the reason why that sect of philosophers which sets the greatest value upon pleasure, has fixed it chiefly in insensibility of pain. To be free from ill, is the greatest good that man can hope for, as Ennius says,

> "Nimium boni est, cui nihil est mali;"[4]

for that very tickling and sting which are in certain plea-

[1] In November, 1580.

[2] "Men are less sensitive to pleasure than to pain."—LIVY, XXX. 21.

[3] "The body is vexed with a little sting that scarcely penetrates the skin, while the most perfect health is not perceived. This only pleases me, that neither side nor foot is plagued; except these, scarce any one can tell, whether he's in health or no."—LA BOETIE, *Poemata*.

[4] Ennius, ap. Cicero, De Finib., ii. 13.

sures, and that seem to raise us above simple health and insensibility: that active, moving, and, I know not how, itching and biting pleasure, even that very pleasure itself aims at nothing but insensibility as its mark. The lust, that carries us headlong to women's embraces, is directed to no other end but only to cure the torment of our ardent and furious desires, and only requires to be glutted and laid at rest and delivered from that fever; and so of the rest. I say then that, if simplicity conducts us to a state free from evil, it leads us to a very happy one, according to our condition. And yet we are not to imagine it so leaden an insensibility as to be totally without sense: for Crantor had very good reason to controvert the insensibility of Epicurus, if founded so deep that the very first attack and birth of evils were not to be perceived. "I do not approve such an insensibility as is neither possible nor to be desired: I am well content not to be sick; but, if I am, I would know that I am so; and if a caustic be applied or incisions made in any part, I would feel them."[1] In truth, whoever would take away the knowledge and sense of evil, would, at the same time, eradicate the sense of pleasure, and, in short, annihilate man himself: "Istud nihil dolere, non sine magna mercēde contingit immanitatis in animo, stuporis in corde."[2] Evil appertains to man in its turn; neither is pain always to be avoided, nor pleasure always pursued.

'Tis a great advantage to the honour of ignorance that knowledge itself throws us into its arms when she finds herself puzzled to fortify us against the weight of evils; she is constrained to come to this composition, to give us the reins, and permit us to fly into the lap of the other, and to shelter ourselves under her protection from the strokes and injuries of fortune. For what else is her meaning when she instructs us to divert our thoughts from the ills that press upon us, and entertain them with the meditation of pleasures past and gone; to comfort ourselves in present afflictions with the remembrance of fled

[1] Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., iii. 7.

[2] "An insensibility, that is not to be purchased but at the price of the humanity of the soul and of stupidity in the body."—*Idem, ibid.*, vi

delights, and to call to our succour a vanished satisfaction, to oppose it to what lies heavy upon us? "Levationes ægritudinum in avocatione a cogitanda molestia, et revocatione ad contemplandas voluptates ponit:"[1] if it be not that where power fails her she will supply it with policy, and make use of a supple trip, when force of limbs will not serve the turn? For not only to a philosopher, but to any man in his right wits, when he has upon him the thirst of a burning fever, what satisfaction can it be to remember the pleasure of drinking Greek wine? it would rather be to make matters worse:

"Che ricordarsi il ben doppia la noja."[2]

Of the same stamp is the other counsel that philosophy gives; only to remember past happiness and to forget the troubles we have undergone;[3] as if we had the science of oblivion in our power: 'tis a counsel for which we are never a straw the better:

"Suavis laborum est præteritorum memoria."[4]

How? Is philosophy, that should arm me to contend with fortune, and steel my courage to trample all human adversities under foot, arrived at this degree of cowardice, to make me hide my head and save myself by these pitiful and ridiculous shifts? for the memory represents to us not what we choose but what it pleases; nay, there is nothing that so much imprints anything in our memory as a desire to forget it: and 'tis a sure way to retain and keep anything safe in the soul, to solicit her to lose it. This is false: "Est situm in nobis, ut et adversa quasi perpetua oblivione obruamus, et secunda jucunde et suaviter meminerimus;"[5] and this is true, "Memini etiam quæ nolo: oblivisci non pos-

[1] "The way to dissipate present grief is to recall to contemplation past pleasures."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, iii. 15.

[2] "The remembrance of pleasure doubles the sense of present pain."

[3] Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., iii. 15.

[4] "The memory of past evils is sweet."—EURIPIDES, apud CICERO, *De Finib.*, ii. 32.

[5] "And it is in our power to bury, as it were, in a perpetual oblivion all adverse accidents, and to retain a pleasant and delightful memory of our successes."—CICERO, *De Finib.*, i. 17.

sum quæ volo."[1] And whose counsel is this? his, "qui se unus sapientem profiteri sit ausus;"[2]

> "Qui genus humanum ingenio superavit, et omnes
> Præstinxit, stellas exortus uti ætherius sol."[3]

To empty and disfurnish the memory, is not this the true and proper way to ignorance?

> "Iners malorum remedium ignorantia est."[4]

We find several other like precepts whereby we are permitted to borrow from the vulgar frivolous appearances where reason, in all her vivacity and vigour, cannot do the feat, provided they administer satisfaction and comfort; where they cannot cure the wound, they are content to palliate and benumb it. I believe they will not deny me this, that if they could establish order and constancy in a state of life that could maintain itself in ease and pleasure by some debility of judgment, they would accept it:

> "Potare, et spargere flores
> Incipiam, patiarque vel inconsultus haberi."[5]

There would be a great many philosophers of Lycas' mind: this man being otherwise of very regular manners, living quietly and contentedly in his family, and not failing in any office of his duty, either towards his own people or strangers, and very carefully preserving himself from hurtful things, was nevertheless, by some distemper in his brain, possessed with a conceit that he was perpetually in the theatre, viewing the several entertainments, and enjoying the amusements and the shows and the best comedies in the world: and being cured by the physicians of his frenzy, had much ado to forbear endeavouring by process of law to

[1] "I also remember what I would not; but I cannot forget what I would."—CICERO, *De Finib.*, i. 32.

[2] "Who alone durst profess himself a wise man (Epicurus)."—*Idem, ibid.*, ii. 3.

[3] "Who all mankind surpassed in genius, effacing them as the rising sun puts out the stars."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 1056.

[4] "Ignorance is but a dull remedy for evils."—SENECA, *Œdip.*, act iii. 7.

[5] "I will drink and strew flowers, though the world should think me mad."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 5, 14.

compel them to restore him again to his pleasing imaginations:

"Pol! me occidistis, amici,
Non servastis, ait; cui sic extorta voluptas,
Et demptus per vim mentis gratissimus error:"[1]

with a madness like that of Thrasylaus, the son of Pythodorus, who had grown to believe that all the ships that weighed anchor from the port of Pyræus and that came into the haven, only made their voyages for his profit, congratulating himself on their happy navigation, and receiving them with the greatest joy. His brother Crito having caused him to be restored to his better understanding, he infinitely regretted that sort of condition wherein he had lived with so much delight and free from all anxiety.[2] 'Tis according to the old Greek verse, "that there is a great deal of convenience in not being over wise."

Ἐν τῷ φρονεῖν γὰρ μηδὲν, ἡδιστος βίος.[3]

And Ecclesiastes,[4] "In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

Even that to which philosophy consents in general, that last remedy which she applies to all sorts of necessities, to put an end to the life we are not able to endure. "Placet? pare. Non placet? quacunque vis, exi. . . . Pungit dolor? vel fodiat sane: si nudus es, da jugulum: sin tectus armis Vulcaniis, id est fortitudine, resiste;"[5] and these words so used in the Greek festivals, "Aut bibat, aut abeat"[6] that sound better upon the tongue of a Gascon, who naturally changes the b into v than upon that of Cicero:[7]

[1] "By heaven! he said, you have killed me, my friends, and not saved me; my dear delights and pleasing error by my returning sense are taken from me."—HORACE, *Ep.* ii. 2, 138.

[2] Athenæus, book xii., Ælian, Var. Hist., iv. 25, where he is called Thrasyllus.

[3] Sophocles, Ajax, ver. 552.

[4] Chap. i. 18.

[5] "Does it please? bear it. Not please? go out, how thou wilt. Does grief prick thee? nay, if it stab thee too: if thou art weaponless, present thy throat: if covered with the arms of Vulcan, that is fortitude, resist it."—Adapted from SENECA, *Ep.*, 70, and CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 14.

[6] "Let him drink or go."—CICERO, *ubi supra*, v. 41.

[7] "This remark upon the Gascon pronunciation, which chooses

"Vivere si recte nescis, decede peritis.
Lusisti satis, edisti satis, atque bibisti;
Tempus abire tibi est, ne potum largius æquo
Rideat, et pulset lasciva decentius ætas:"[1]

what is it other than a confession of his impotency, and a retreating not only to ignorance, to be there in safety, but even to stupidity, insensibility, and nonentity?

"Democritum postquam matura vetustas
Admonuit memorem, motus languescere mentis:
Sponte sua letho caput obvius obtulit ipse."[2]

'Tis what Antisthenes said, "That a man must either make provision of sense to understand, or of a halter to hang himself:[3] and what Chrysippus alleged upon this saying of the poet Tyrtæus, "Or to arrive at virtue or at death:"[4] and Crates said, "That love could be cured by hunger, if not by time; and if a man disliked these two remedies, by a rope."[5] That Sextius of whom both Seneca and Plutarch[6] speak with so high an encomium, having applied himself (all other things set aside) to the study of philosophy, resolved to throw himself into the sea, finding the progress of his studies too tedious and slow. He ran to find death, since he could not overtake knowledge. These are the words of the law upon this subject: "If, peradventure, some great inconvenience happen, for which there is no remedy, the haven is near, and a man may save himself by swimming out of his body, as out of a leaky skiff; for 'tis the fear of dying, and not the love of life, that ties the fool to his body."

As life renders itself by simplicity more pleasant, so, also,

to alter b into v, is only to be applied to the word *bibat*, otherwise it would not be very properly intended here; because, if the b in the word *abeat* was changed into v, it would mar the construction which Montaigne would put, according to Cicero, upon this phrase, 'Aut bibat, aut abeat.'"—COSTE.

[1] "If thou canst not live right, give place to those that can; thou hast eaten, drunk, amused thyself to thy content; 'tis time to make departure, lest, being overdosed, the young ones first laugh at thee, and then turn thee out."—HORACE, *Ep.* ii. 2, 213.

[2] "So soon as, through age, Democritus found a manifest decadence in his mind, he himself went to meet death."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 1052.

[3] Contradictions of the Stoic Philosophers, c. 14.

[4] Idem, ibid.

[5] Diog. Laert., vi. 86.

[6] On Amendment in Virtue.

more innocent and better, as I was saying before. The simple and ignorant, says St. Paul, raise themselves up to heaven, and take possession of it; and we, with all our knowledge, plunge ourselves into the infernal abyss. I am neither swayed by Valentinian,[1] a professed enemy to all knowledge and literature; nor by Licinus, both Roman emperors, who called them the poison and pest of all politic government: nor by Mahomet, who, as I have heard, interdicted all manner of learning to his followers; but the example of the great Lycurgus and his authority, with the reverence of the divine Lacedæmonian policy, so great, so admirable, and so long flourishing in virtue and happiness without any institution or practice of letters, ought, certainly to be of very great weight. Such as return from the new world discovered by the Spaniards in our fathers' days can testify to us how much more honestly and regularly those nations live, without magistrate and without laws, than ours do, where there are more officers and laws than there are other sorts of men, or than there are law suits:

> "Di cittatore piene, e di libelli,
> D' esamine, e di carte di procure,
> Hanno le mani et il seno, e gran fastelli
> Di chiose, di consigli, e di letture;
> Per cui le facultà de' poverelli
> Non sino mai nelle città sicure;
> Hanno dietro e dinanzi, e d'ambi i lati,
> Notai, procuratori, e avvocati."[2]

It was what a Roman senator said of the later ages, that their predecessors' breath stank of garlic, but their stomachs were perfumed with a good conscience; and that on the contrary, those of his time were all sweet odour without,

[1] Or rather Valens.

[2] Ariosto, xiv. 84.

> "Her lap was full of writs and of citations,
> Of process of actions and arrest,
> Of bills, of answers, and of replications,
> In Courts of Delegates and of Requests,
> To grieve the simple with great vexations:
> She had resorting to her as her guests,
> Attending on her circuits and her journeys,
> Scriveners and clerks, and lawyers and attorneys."
>
> Sir John Harrington's translation.

but stank within of all sorts of vices;[1] that is to say, as I interpret it, that they abounded with learning and eloquence, but were very defective in moral honesty. Incivility, ignorance, simplicity, roughness, are the natural companions of innocence; curiosity, subtlety and knowledge bring malice in their train: humility, fear, obedience, and affability, which are the principal things that support and maintain human society, require an empty and docile soul, and little presuming upon itself. Christians have a special knowledge how natural and original an evil curiosity is in man: the thirst of knowledge, and the desire to become more wise, was the first ruin of human kind, and the way by which it precipitated itself into eternal damnation. Pride is his ruin and corruption: 'tis pride that diverts him from the common path, and makes him embrace novelties, and rather choose to be head of a troop, lost and wandering in the path of perdition, to be tutor and teacher of error and lies, than to be a disciple in the school of truth, suffering himself to be led and guided by the hand of another, in the right and beaten road. 'Tis, peradventure, the meaning of this old Greek saying: 'Η δεισιδαιμονία καθάπερ πατρὶ τῷ τύφῳ πείθεται.[2] O presumption, how much dost thou hinder us!

After that Socrates was told that the god of wisdom had attributed to him the title of sage, he was astonished at it,[3] and searching and examining himself throughout, could find no foundation for this divine decree: he knew others as just, temperate, valiant, and learned as himself, and more eloquent, handsome, and more profitable to their country than he. At last, he concluded that he was not distinguished from others nor wise but only because he did not think himself so, and that his god considered the self-opinion of knowledge and wisdom as a singular stupidity of man; and that his best doctrine was the doctrine of ignorance, and simplicity his best wisdom. The sacred word declares those miserable who have an opinion of themselves: "Dust and ashes," says it to such, "what hast thou wherein to glorify thyself?" And in another

[1] Varro, cited by Nonius Marcellus, *in verbo* Cepe.

[2] "That superstition follows pride and obeys it as if it were a father."

[3] Plato, Apology of Socrates.

place, "God has made man like unto a shadow," of which who can judge, when by the removing of the light it shall be vanished? It is nothing but of us.

Our strength is so far from being able to comprehend the divine height, that of the works of our Creator those best bear his mark and are best His, which we the least understand. To meet with an incredible thing, is an occasion with Christians to believe.[1] It is all the more reason that it is against human reason; if it were according to reason, it would no longer be a miracle; if it had an example, it would be no longer a singular thing. "Melius scitur Deus nesciendo,"[2] says St. Augustine; and Tacitus, "Sanctius est ac reverentius de actis Deorum credere quam scire;"[3] and Plato thinks there is something of impiety in inquiring too curiously into God, the world, and the first causes of things: "atque illum quidem parentem hujus universitatis invenire, difficile; et quam jam inveneris, indicare in vulgus, nefas,"[4] says Cicero. We pronounce, indeed, power, truth, justice, which are words that signify some great thing; but that thing we neither see nor conceive. We say that God fears, that God is angry, that God loves—

"Immortalia mortali sermone notantes:"[5]

which are all agitations and emotions that cannot be in God, according to our form, nor can we imagine it, according to His. It only belongs to God to know Himself, and to interpret His own works; and He does it in our language, to stoop and descend to us who grovel upon the earth. How can Prudence, which is the choice betwixt good and evil, be properly attributed to Him, whom no evil can touch? How the reason and intelligence, which we make use of, so as by obscure to arrive at apparent things, seeing that nothing is obscure to Him? and justice, which distributes

[1] "Credo quia impossibile."—ST. AUGUSTIN.

[2] "God is better known by not knowing."—AUGUSTINE, *De Ordine*, ii. 16.

[3] "It is more holy and reverend to believe the works of God, than to know them."—TACITUS, *De Mor. Germ.*, c. 34.

[4] "To find out the parent of the world is very hard: and when found out, to reveal him to the vulgar, is sin."—CICERO, translation from the *Timæus*.

[5] "Giving to things immortal mortal names."—LUCRETIUS, v. 122.

to every one what appertains to him, a thing created by the society and community of men: how is that in God? how temperance? how the moderation of corporal pleasures, that have no place in the divinity? Fortitude to support pain, labour, and dangers, as little appertains to Him as the rest, these three things having no access to Him:[1] for which reason Aristotle holds Him[2] equally exempt from virtue and vice: "neque gratia neque ira teneri potest; quod quæ talia essent, imbecilla essent omnia."[3]

The participation we have in the knowledge of truth, such as it is, is not acquired by our own force: God has sufficiently given us to understand that by the testimony He has chosen out of the common people, simple and ignorant men, whom he has been pleased to employ to instruct us in His admirable secrets. Our faith is not of our own acquiring, 'tis purely the gift of another's bounty; 'tis not by meditation or by virtue of our own understanding that we have acquired our religion, but by foreign authority and command; the weakness of our judgment more assists us than force, and our blindness more than our clearness of sight; 'tis rather by the mediation of our ignorance than of our knowledge that we know anything of the divine Wisdom. 'Tis no wonder if our natural and earthly means cannot conceive that supernatural and heavenly knowledge: let us bring nothing of our own, but obedience and subjection; for, as it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."[4]

Should I examine, finally, whether it be in the power of man to find out that which he seeks, and if that quest

[1] All this is taken from Cicero, De Natura Deor., iii. 15.
[2] Moral. ad Nicom., vii. 1.
[3] "He can be affected neither with favour nor indignation, because both those are the effects of frailty."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*
[4] 1 Corinthians i. 19, 20, 21.

wherein he has busied himself so many ages has enriched him with any new force or any solid truth: I believe he will confess, if he speaks from his conscience, that all he has got by so long an inquisition is only to have learned to know his own weakness. We have only by long study confirmed and verified the natural ignorance we were in before. The same has fallen out to men truly wise which befall ears of corn; they shoot and raise their heads high and pert, whilst empty; but when full and swollen with grain in maturity, begin to flag and droop; so, men having tried and sounded all things, and having found in that accumulation of knowledge and provision of so many various things, nothing massive and firm, nothing but vanity, have quitted their presumption and acknowledged their natural condition. 'Tis what Velleius reproaches Cotta with and Cicero, that what they had learned of Philo, was that they had learned nothing.[1] Pherecydes, one of the seven sages, writing to Thales upon his deathbed: "I have," said he, "given order to my people, after my interment to carry my writings to thee. If they please thee and the other sages, publish them; if not, suppress them. They contain no certainty with which I myself am satisfied. I pretend not to know the truth or to attain unto it; I rather open than discover things.[2] The wisest man that ever was,[3] being asked what he knew, made answer; he knew this, that he knew nothing. By which he verified what has been said, that the greatest part of what we know is the least of what we do not know, that is to say, that even what we think we know, is but a piece, and a very little one, of our ignorance. We know things in dreams, says Plato, and are ignorant of them in reality. "Omnes pene veteres, nihil cognosci, nihil percipi, nihil sciri posse dixerunt: angustos sensus, imbecilles animos, brevia curricula vitæ."[4] And of Cicero himself, who stood indebted to his learning for all he was, Valerius says,[5] that in his old age he began to dis-

[1] Cicero, De Natura Deor., i. 17.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, i. 22.

[3] Socrates.

[4] "Almost all the ancients have declared, that there is nothing can be known, nothing can be understood: the senses are too weak; men's minds too weak, and the course of life too short."—CICERO, *Acad.*, i. 12.

[5] Valerius Maximus.

relish letters, and when most occupied with them, it was in independence of any party: following what he thought probable, now in one sect and then in another, evermore wavering under the doubts of the Academy: "Dicendum est, sed ita, ut nihil affirmem, quæram omnia, dubitans plerumque, et mihi diffidens."[1]

I should have too fine a game, should I consider man in his common way of living and in gross: and yet I might do it by his own rule, who judges truth, not by the weight but by the number of votes. Let us leave the people alone,

"Qui vigilans stertit,
Mortua cui vita est prope jam, vivo atque videnti;"[2]

who neither feel nor judge themselves, and let most of their natural faculties lie idle. I will take man in his highest state. Let us consider him in that small number of men, excellent and culled out from the rest, who having been endowed with a grand and special natural force, have, moreover, hardened and whetted it by care, study, and art, and raised it to the highest pitch of wisdom to which it can possibly arrive. They have adjusted their souls in all senses and all biases; have propped and supported them with all foreign helps proper for them, and enriched and adorned them with all they could borrow for their advantage, both within and without the world: these are they in whom is placed the supremest height to which human nature can attain. They have regulated the world with polities and laws; they have instructed it with arts and sciences, and further instructed it by the example of their admirable conduct. I shall make account of none but such men as these, their testimony and experience; let us examine how far they have proceeded, and on what they reposed their surest hold; the maladies and defects that we shall find amongst these men, the rest of the world may very boldly also declare to be their own.

Whoever goes in search of anything, must come to this,

[1] "I am to speak, but so as to affirm nothing: I shall inquire into all things, but for the most part in doubt, and distrustful of myself."—CICERO, *De Divin.*, ii. 3.

[2] "Who waking snore; whose life is little better than death; though living and awake."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 1061, 1059.

either to say that he has found it, or that it is not to be found, or that he is yet upon the quest. All philosophy is divided into these three kinds: her design is to seek out truth, knowledge, and certainty. The Peripatetics, Epicureans, Stoics, and others, have thought they had found it: these have established the sciences that we have, and have treated of them as of certainties. Clitomachus, Carneades, and the Academics, have despaired in their quest, and concluded that truth could not be conceived by our capacity; the result with these is all weakness and human ignorance; this sect has had the most and most noble followers. Pyrrho and other sceptics or epichists, whose dogmas were held by many of the ancients to have been taken from Homer, the seven sages, Archilocus, Euripides, Zeno, Democritus, and Xenophanes, say, that they are yet upon the search of truth: these conclude that the others who think they have found it out are infinitely deceived; and that it is too daring a vanity in the second sort to determine that human reason is not able to attain unto it; for to establish the standard of our power, to know and judge the difficulty of things, is a great and extreme knowledge, of which they doubt whether man is capable:

> "Nil sciri si quis putat, id quoque nescit
> An sciri possit quo se nil scire fatetur."[1]

The ignorance that knows itself, judges, and condemns itself, is not an absolute ignorance: to be this, it must be ignorant of itself; so that the profession of the Pyrrhonians is to waver, doubt, and inquire, not to make themselves sure of or responsible to themselves for anything. Of the three actions of the soul, the imaginative, the appetitive, and the consenting, they receive the two first; the last they hold ambiguous, without inclination or approbation, one way or the other, however slight. Zeno represented by motion his imagination of these divisions of the faculties of the soul; an open and expanded hand signified Appearance: a hand half shut and the fingers a little bent, Consent: a clutched fist, Comprehension; when with the

[1] "He that says nothing can be known, does not know whether anything can be known, when he confesses that he knows nothing."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 470.

left hand he yet pressed the fist closer, Knowledge.[1] Now this situation of their judgment, upright and inflexible, receiving all objects without application or consent, led them to their Ataraxy, which is a condition of life, peaceable, temperate, and exempt from the agitations we receive by the impression of the opinion and knowledge that we think we have of things; from which spring fear, avarice, envy, immoderate desires, ambition, pride, superstition, love of novelty, rebellion, disobedience, obstinacy, and the greatest part of bodily ills; nay, by this they exempt themselves from the jealousy of their discipline: for they debate after a very gentle manner; they fear no rejoinder in their disputes: when they affirm that heavy things descend, they would be sorry to be believed, and love to be contradicted, to engender doubt and suspense of judgment, which is their end. They only put out their propositions to contend with those they think we have in our belief. If you take their arguments, they will as readily maintain the contrary; 'tis all one to them; they have no choice. If you maintain that snow is black, they will argue, on the contrary, that it is white; if you say it is neither the one nor the other, they will maintain that 'tis both. If you hold, as of certain judgment, that you know nothing of it, they will maintain that you do: yes, and if, by an affirmative axiom, you assure them that you doubt, they will argue against you that you doubt not, or that you cannot judge and determine that you doubt. And by this extremity of doubt, which jostles itself, they separate and divide themselves from many opinions, even of those that have several ways maintained doubt and ignorance. Why shall not they be allowed, say they, as well as the dogmatists, one to say green, another yellow; why may not they also doubt? Can anything be proposed to us to grant or deny which it shall not be permitted to consider as ambiguous? And where others are carried away, either by the custom of their country or by the instruction of parents, or by accident, as by a tempest, without judging and without choice, nay, and for the most part before the age of discretion, to such or such an opinion, to the sect of the

[1] Cicero, Acad., ii. 47.

Stoics or Epicureans, to which they are enslaved and fast bound, as to a thing they cannot shake off, "ad quamcumque disciplinam, velut tempestate, delati, ad eam, tanquam ad saxum, adhærescunt;"[1] why shall not these likewise be permitted to maintain their liberty and to consider things without obligation or slavery? "Hoc liberiores et solutiores, quod integra illis est judicandi potestas."[2] Is it not of some advantage to be disengaged from the necessity that curbs others? is it not better to remain in suspense than to entangle one's self in the innumerable errors that human fancy has produced? is it not much better to suspend one's persuasion than to intermeddle with these wrangling and seditious divisions? What shall I choose? "What you please, provided you do choose."[3] A very foolish answer, but one, nevertheless, to which all the dogmatists seem to point; by which we are not permitted to be ignorant of that of which we are ignorant. Take the most eminent side, that of the greatest reputation; it will never be so sure, that to defend it you will not be forced to attack and contend with a hundred and a hundred adversaries; is it not better to keep out of this hurly-burly? You are permitted to embrace, with as much zeal as honour and life, Aristotle's opinion of the immortality of the soul, and to give the lie to Plato thereupon, and shall they be interdicted from doubting it? If it be lawful for Panætius to maintain his opinion about augury, dreams, oracles, vaticinations, of which things the Stoics make no doubt at all, why may not a wise man dare to do the same in all things which this man dared to do in those he had learned of his masters, and established by the common consent of the school whereof he is a professor and a member? If it be a child that judges, he knows not what it is: if a sage, he is prepossessed. They have reserved for themselves a marvellous advantage in battle, having eased themselves of the care of defence; if you strike them, 'tis no matter, provided they strike too; and they make every-

[1] "To whatever discipline they are carried, as by a tempest, they cleave to it as to a rock."—CICERO, *Acad.*, ii. 3.

[2] "In this more unconstrained and free, because they have the greater power of judging."—*Idem, ibid.*

[3] Idem, ibid., ii. 43.

thing serve their purpose; if they overcome, your argument is lame; if you, theirs: if they fail, they verify ignorance; if you fail, you do it: if they prove that nothing is known, it is well; if they cannot prove it, 'tis equally well: "Ut quum in eadem re paria contrariis in partibus momenta inveniuntur, facilius ab utraque parte assertio sustineatur:"[1] and they pretend to find out with much greater facility why a thing is false than why 'tis true; that which is not, than that which is; and what they do not believe, than what they do. Their way of speaking is, "I affirm nothing; it is no more so than so, or than either one nor t'other: I understand it not. Appearances are everywhere equal: the law of speaking, *pro* or *con.*, is the same: nothing seems true that may not seem false." Their sacramental word is ἐπέχω, that is to say "I hold on, I do not budge." This is the burden of their song, and others of like stuff. The effect of it is a pure, entire, perfect, and absolute suspension of the judgment: they make use of their reason to inquire and debate, but not to fix and determine. Whoever shall imagine a perpetual confession of ignorance, a judgment without bias or inclination, upon any occasion whatever, conceives a true idea of Pyrrhonism. I express this fancy as well as I can, by reason that many find it hard to conceive; and the authors themselves represent it somewhat variously and obscurely.

As to what concerns the actions of life, they are in this of the common fashion; they yield and lend themselves to the natural inclinations, to the power and impulse of passions, to the constitutions of laws and customs, and to the tradition of arts: "Non enim nos Deus ista scire, sed tantummodo uti, voluit."[2] They suffer their ordinary actions to be guided by these things without any dispute or judgment; for which reason, I cannot well reconcile with this argument what is said of Pyrrho; they represent him stupid and immovable, leading a kind of savage and unsociable life, getting in the way of the jostle of carts, going

[1] "So that, when equal reasons happen *pro* and *con.* in the same matter, the judgment may, on both sides, be more easily suspended."—CICERO, *Acad.*, i. 12.

[2] "For God would not have us know, but only use those things."—CICERO, *Divin.*, i. 78.

upon the edge of precipices, and refusing to accommodate himself to the laws. This is to exaggerate his discipline; he would never make himself a stock or a stone, he would show himself a living man, discoursing, reasoning, enjoying all natural conveniences and pleasures, employing and making use of all his corporal and spiritual faculties, in rule and reason; the fantastic, imaginary and false privileges that man has usurped of lording it, of ordaining and establishing, he utterly quitted and renounced. There is no sect but is constrained to permit its sage to follow many things not comprehended, perceived, or consented to in its rules, if he means to live: and if he goes to sea he follows that design, not knowing whether it will be successful to him or no, and relies upon the tightness of the vessel, the experience of the pilot, the fitness of the season; probable circumstances only, according to which he is bound to go, and suffer himself to be governed by appearances, provided there be no express and manifest contrariety in them. He has a body, he has a soul; the senses push him, the mind spurs him on; and although he do not find in himself this proper and singular mark of judging, nor perceive that he ought not to engage his consent, considering that there may be some false, equal to these true appearances, yet does he not for all that fail of carrying on the offices of his life fully, freely and conveniently. How many arts are there that profess to consist more in conjecture than in knowledge, that decide not upon true and false, and only follow that which seems true? There is, say they, true and false, and we have in us wherewith to seek it, but not to fix it when we touch it. We are much more prudent in letting ourselves be carried away by the swing of the world without inquisition; a soul clear from prejudice has a marvellous advance towards tranquillity and repose. Men who judge and control their judges never duly submit to them.

How much more docile and easy to be governed, both in the laws of religion and civil polity, are simple and incurious minds, than those over-vigilant and pedagoguish wits that will still be prating of divine and human causes? There is nothing in human invention that carries so great a show of likelihood and utility as this; this presents man, naked and empty, confessing his natural weakness, fit to re-

ceive some foreign force from above; unfurnished of human, and therefore more apt to receive divine knowledge; setting aside his own judgment to make more room for faith; not misbelieving, nor establishing any doctrine against the laws and common observances; humble, obedient, disciplinable, studious, a sworn enemy of heresy, and consequently freeing himself from vain and irreligious opinions introduced by false sects; 'tis a blank paper prepared to receive from the finger of God such forms as He shall please to write upon it. The more we resign and commit ourselves to God, and the more we renounce ourselves, of the greater value are we. Take in good part, says Ecclesiastes, the things that present themselves to thee, as they seem and taste from hand to mouth: the rest is out of thy knowledge. "Dominus novit cogitationes hominum, quoniam vanæ sunt."[1]

Thus we see that, of the three general sects of philosophy, two make open profession of doubt and ignorance; and in that of the Dogmatists, which is the third, it is easy to discover that the greatest part of them only assume a face of assurance that they may have the better air; they have not so much thought to establish any certainty for us, as to show us how far they have proceeded in their search of truth, "Quam docti fingunt magis quam norunt."[2] Timæus, having to instruct Socrates in what he knew of the gods, the world and men, proposes to speak to him as a man to a man, and that it is sufficient if his reasons are as probable as those of another; for that exact reasons were neither in his nor in any other mortal hand. Which one of his followers has thus imitated: "Ut potero, explicabo; nec tamen ut Pythius Apollo, certa ut sint et fixa, quæ dixero; sed ut homunculus, probabilia conjectura sequens;"[3] and this upon the natural and common subject of the contempt of death: he has elsewhere translated from the very words of

[1] "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of men, that they are but vanity."—*Psalm* xciv. 11.

[2] "Which the learned rather feign than know."

[3] "I will, as well as I am able, explain; yet not as Pythius Apollo, that what I say should be fixed and certain, but like an ordinary man that follows probabilities by conjecture."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, lib. i. 9.

Plato: "Si forte, de deorum natura ortuque mundi disserentes, minus id, quod habemus in animo, consequimur, haud erit mirum; æquum est enim meminisse, et me, qui disseram, hominem, esse, et vos, qui judicetis; ut, si probabilia dicentur, nihil ultra requiratis."[1] Aristotle ordinarily heaps up a great number of other opinions and beliefs, to compare them with his own, and to let us see how much he has gone beyond them, and how much nearer he approaches to probability: for truth is not to be judged by the authority and testimony of others: which made Epicurus religiously avoid quoting them in his writings. This is the prince of all dogmatists, and yet we are told by him that much knowledge administers to many occasion of doubting the more;[2] we see him sometimes purposely so shroud and muffle up himself in thick and inextricable obscurity, that we know not what use to make of his advice; it is, in fact, a Pyrrhonism under a resolutive form. Hear Cicero's protestation, who expounds to us another's fancy by his own: "Qui requirunt, quid de quaque re ipsi sentiamus, curiosius id faciunt, quam necesse est. Hæc in philosophia ratio contra omnia disserendi, nullamque rem aperte judicandi, profecta a Socrate, repetita ab Arcesilao, confirmata à Carneade, usque ad nostram viget ætatem. Hi sumus, qui omnibus veris falsa quædam adjuncta esse dicamus, tanta similitudine, ut in iis nulla insit certe judicandi et assentiendi nota."[3] Why has not Aristotle only but most

[1] "If perchance, when we discourse of the nature of gods, and the world's original, we cannot do it as we desire, it will be no great wonder. For it is just you should remember that both I who speak, and you who are to judge, are men; so that if probable things are delivered, you should require and expect no more."—CICERO, ex *Timæo*, c. 3.

[2] "Qui plura novit, eum majora sequuntur dubia." This thought does not belong to Aristotle; it is attributed to Æneas Silvius, who became Pope as Pius II.—NAIGEON.

[3] "They who desire to know what we think of everything, are more inquisitive than is necessary. This practice in philosophy, of disputing against everything, and of absolutely concluding nothing, begun by Socrates, repeated by Arcesilaus, and confirmed by Carneades, has continued in use even to our own times. We are of those who declare that there is so great a mixture of things false amongst all that are true, and they so resemble one another, that there can be in them no certain mark to direct us, either to judge or assent."—CICERO, *De Nat. Deor.*, i. 5.

of the philosophers, affected difficulty, if not to emphasize the vanity of the subject, and amuse the curiosity of our mind, by giving it this bare, hollow bone to pick. Clitomachus affirmed that he could never discover, by Carneades' writings, what opinion he was of.[1] This was what made Epicurus affect to be abstruse, and that procured Heraclitus to be surnamed σκοτεινος.[2] Difficulty is a coin the learned make use of, like jugglers, to conceal the inanity of their art, and which human sottishness easily takes for current pay:

> "Clarus, ob obscuram linguam, magis inter inanes . . .
> Omnia enim stolidi magis admirantur, amantque,
> Inversis quæ sub verbis latitantia cernunt."[3]

Cicero[4] reprehends some of his friends for giving more of their time to the study of astrology, law, logic, and geometry, than they were worth, saying that they were by these diverted from the duties of life, more profitable and more worthy studies; the Cyrenaic philosophers[5] equally despised natural philosophy and logic. Zeno, in the very beginning of the Books of the Commonwealth, declared all the liberal arts of no use.[6] Chrysippus said that what Plato and Aristotle had written concerning logic, they had only done in sport and by way of exercise, and could not believe that they spoke in earnest of so vain a thing; Plutarch says the same of metaphysics; and Epicurus would have said as much of rhetoric, grammar, poesy, mathematics, and, natural philosophy excepted, of all the sciences, and Socrates of them all, excepting that of manners and of life; whatever any one required to be instructed in by him, he would ever, in the first place, demand an account of the conditions of his life present and past, which he examined and judged, esteeming all other learning subordinate and supernumerary to that, "Parum mihi placeant eæ literæ quæ ad virtutem

[1] Cicero, Acad., ii. 45.
[2] Obscure.
[3] "He got a great name, among the weak-witted, especially by reason of the obscurity of his language; for fools admire and love rather such things as are wrapt in dubious phrase."—LUCRETIUS, i. 640.
[4] De Offic., i. 6.
[5] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 92.
[6] Idem, ibid., vii. 32.

doctoribus nihil profuerunt."[1] Most of the arts have been, in like manner, decried by the same knowledge; but these men did not consider that it was from the purpose to exercise their wits in those very matters wherein there was no solid advantage.

As to the rest, some have looked upon Plato as a dogmatist, others as a doubter; others, in some things the one, and in other things the other. Socrates, the conductor of his dialogisms, is eternally upon questions and stirring up disputes, never determining, never satisfying; and professes to have no other science but that of opposing himself. Homer, their author, has equally laid the foundations of all the sects of philosophy, to show how indifferent it was which way we should choose. 'Tis said that ten several sects sprung from Plato; and, in my opinion, never did any instruction halt and waver, if his does not.

Socrates said that wise women,[2] in taking upon them the trade of helping others to bring forth, left the trade of bringing forth themselves; and that he by the title of a sage man, which the gods had conferred upon him, was disabled, in his virile and mental love, of the faculty of bringing forth; contenting himself to help and assist those who could, to open their nature, anoint the passes, facilitate the birth, judge of the infant, baptize it, nourish it, fortify it, swathe it, circumcise it: exercising and employing his understanding in the perils and fortunes of others.

It is so with the most part of this third sort of authors, as the ancients have observed in the writings of Anaxagoras, Democritus, Parmenides, Xenophanes, and others: they have a way of writing doubtful in substance and design, rather inquiring than teaching, though they mix their style with some dogmatical periods. Is not the same thing seen in Seneca and Plutarch? how many contradictions are there to be found in these, if a man pry narrowly into them? The reconcilers of the jurisconsults ought first to reconcile them, each for himself. Plato seems to have affected this method of philosophizing in dialogues, to the end that he

[1] "That learning is in small repute with me, which nothing helped the teachers themselves to virtue."—SALLUST, *De Bello Jug.*, c. 85.

[2] Midwives, called wise women in French: *Sages femmes.*

might with greater decency from several mouths deliver the diversity and variety of his own fancies. To treat variously of things is to treat of them as well as conformably, and better, that is to say, more copiously and with greater profit. Let us take example from ourselves: judicial judgments are the highest points of dogmatical and determinative speaking: and yet those which our parliaments present to the people, the most exemplary, and most proper to nourish in them the reverence due to that dignity, principally through the sufficiency of the persons exercising it, derive their beauty, not so much from the conclusion, which with them is of daily occurrence and common to every judge, as from the dispute and heat of diverse and contrary arguments, that questions of law permit. And the largest field for reprehension that some philosophers have against others is drawn from the diversities and contradictions wherewith every one of them finds himself perplexed; either on purpose, to show the vacillation of human wit concerning everything; or ignorantly compelled by the volubility and incomprehensibility of all matter; which is the meaning of this phrase: in a slippery and sliding place let us suspend our belief: for, as Euripides says,

"The works of God in various ways perplex us:"[1]

like that which Empedocles, as if rapt with a divine fury and compelled by truth, often strewed here and there in his writings. "No, no; we feel nothing, we see nothing; all things are concealed from us; there is not one thing of which we can positively say it is;"[2] according to the divine saying: "Cogitationes mortalium timidæ, et incertæ adinventiones nostræ, et providentiæ."[3] It is not to be thought strange if men, despairing to overtake what they hunt after, have not yet lost the pleasure of the chase, study being of itself an employment pleasant, and so pleasant that amongst the pleasures the Stoics forbid that also which proceeds from the exercise of the intellect, will have it curbed, and find

[1] Plutarch, On Miracles which have ceased.
[2] Cicero, Acad., ii. 5. Sextus Empiricus, Adver. Mathem.
[3] "For the thoughts of mortal men are timid; and our devices are but uncertain."—*Wisdom*, c. 9, ver. 14.

a kind of intemperance in thirsting too much after knowledge.

Democritus [1] having eaten figs at his table that tasted of honey, fell presently to consider within himself whence they should derive this unusual sweetness; and to be satisfied in it, was about to rise from the table to see the place whence the figs had been gathered; which his maid observing, and having understood the cause, she smilingly told him that he need not trouble himself about that, for she had put them into a vessel in which there had been honey. He was vexed that she had thus deprived him of the occasion of this inquisition and robbed his curiosity of matter to work upon. "Go thy way," said he, "thou hast done me wrong; but for all that I will seek out the cause, as if it were natural;" and would willingly have found out some true reason for a false and imaginary effect. This story of a famous and great philosopher very clearly represents to us the studious passion, that puts us upon the pursuit of things of the acquisition of which we despair. Plutarch gives a like example of one who would not be satisfied in that whereof he was in doubt, that he might not lose the pleasure of inquiring into it; like the other, who would not that his physician should allay the thirst of his fever that he might not lose the pleasure of quenching it by drinking. "Satius est supervacua discere, quam nihil." [2] As in all sorts of feeding, there is often only the mere pleasure of eating, and that what we take, which is acceptable to the palate, is not always nourishing or wholesome; so that which our understandings extract from learning does not cease to be pleasant, though there be nothing in it either nutritive or healthful. Thus say they: the consideration of nature is a diet proper for our minds; it raises and elevates us, makes us disdain low and terrestrial things, by comparing them with those that are celestial and high: even the inquisition of great and occult things is very pleasant, even to those who acquire no other benefit than the reverence and fear of judging it. This is what

[1] Plutarch, Table Talk, qu. 10, lib. i., where, however, Democritus is described as eating, not figs, but cucumbers.—COSTE.

[2] "'Tis better to learn more than is necessary than nothing at all."—SENECA, *Ep.* 88.

they profess.[1] The vain image of this sickly curiosity is yet more manifest in this other example that they so often urge: Eudoxus[2] wished and begged of the gods, that he might once see the sun near at hand, to comprehend its form, greatness, and beauty, though on the condition that he should thereby be immediately burned. He would, at the price of his life, purchase a knowledge of which the use and possession should at the same time be taken from him; and for this sudden and vanished knowledge, lose all the other knowledges he had in the present, or might afterwards acquire.

I cannot easily persuade myself that Epicurus, Plato, and Pythagoras have given us their Atoms, Ideas, and Numbers for current pay: they were too wise to establish their articles of faith upon things so disputable and so uncertain. But, in the then obscurity and ignorance of the world, each of these great personages endeavoured to present some kind or other of image of light; and worked their brains for inventions that might, at all events, have a pleasant and subtle appearance, provided that, false as they were, they might make good their ground against those that would oppose them: "Unicuique ista pro ingenio finguntur, non ex scientiæ vi."[3]

One of the ancients, who was reproached that he professed philosophy, of which he nevertheless, in his own judgment, made no great account, answered that this was truly to philosophize. They would consider all, balance everything, and found this an employment well suited to our natural curiosity; some things they have written for the benefit of public society, as their religions, and, for that consideration, it was but reasonable that they should not examine public opinions too closely, that they might not disturb the common obedience to the laws and customs of their country.

Plato treats of this mystery with a raillery manifest enough; for where he writes as for himself, he gives no certain rule: when he plays the legislator, he borrows a magisterial and positive style, and boldly there foists in his

[1] Cicero, Acad., ii. 41. [2] Diogenes Laertius, *in vita.*

[3] "These things every one fancies according to his wit, and not by any power of knowledge."—SENECA, *Suasor.*, 4.

most fantastic inventions as fit to persuade the vulgar as ridiculous to be believed by himself; knowing very well how fit we are to receive all sorts of impressions, especially the most immoderate and violent: and therefore in his laws he takes singular care that nothing be sung in public but poetry, of which the fabulous relations tend to some useful end; it being so easy to imprint all sorts of phantoms in the human mind, that it were injustice not to feed them rather with profitable untruths than with untruths that are unprofitable or hurtful. He says very plainly in his Republic,[1] "that it is very often necessary for the profit of men to deceive them." It is very easy to distinguish that some of the sects have more followed truth, and others utility, by which the last have gained their reputation. 'Tis the misery of our condition, that often that which presents itself to our imagination for the most true does not also appear the most useful to life; the boldest sects, as the Epicurean, Pyrrhonian, the new Academic, are yet, after all is said and done, constrained to submit to the civil law.

Other subjects there are that they have tumbled and tossed, some to the right and others to the left, every one endeavouring, right or wrong, to give them some kind of colour; for having found nothing so abstruse that they would not venture to touch it, they are often forced to forge weak and ridiculous conjectures, not that they themselves look upon them as any foundation, nor as establishing any certain truth, but merely for exercise: "Non tam id sensisse quod dicerent, quam exercere ingenia materiæ difficultate videntur voluisse."[2] And if we did not take it thus, how should we palliate so great inconstancy, variety, and vanity of opinions as we see have been produced by those excellent and admirable souls? as, for example, what can be more vain than to imagine to dominate God by our analogies and conjectures? to regulate Him and the world by our capacities and our laws? and to make use, at the expense of the Divinity, of that small portion of knowledge He has

[1] Book V.

[2] "Not so much that they themselves believed what they said, as that they seemed to have had a mind to exercise their wits in the difficulty of the matter."—*Auct. Incert.*

been pleased to impart to our natural condition? and, because we cannot extend our sight to His glorious throne, to have brought Him down to our corruption and our miseries?

Of all human and ancient opinions concerning religion, that seems to me the most likely and most excusable that recognized in God an incomprehensible power, the original and preserver of all things, all goodness, all perfection, receiving and taking in good part the honour and reverence that man paid unto Him, under what method, name, or ceremonies soever:

> "Jupiter omnipotens, rerum, regumque deumque
> Progenitor, genitrixque."[1]

This zeal has universally been looked upon from heaven with a gracious eye. All governments have reaped fruit from their devotion: impious men and actions have everywhere had suitable result. Pagan histories recognize dignity, order, justice, prodigies and oracles, employed for their profit and instruction, in their fabulous religions: God, peradventure, through His mercy, vouchsafing by these temporal benefits, to cherish the tender principles of a kind of brutish knowledge that natural reason gave them of Him amid the deceiving images of their dreams. Not only deceiving and false, but impious also, and injurious, are those that man has forged from his own invention; and of all the religions that St. Paul found in repute at Athens, that which they had dedicated to THE UNKNOWN GOD seemed to him the most to be excused.[2]

Pythagoras shadowed the truth a little more closely, judging that the knowledge of this first Cause and Being of beings ought to be indefinite, without prescription, without declaration; that it was nothing else than the extreme effort of our imagination towards perfection, every one amplifying the idea according to his capacity. But if Numa attempted to conform the devotion of his people to this project, to attach them to a religion purely mental,

[1] "All powerful Jove, father and mother of the world, of kings and gods."—VALERIUS SORANUS, apud St. Augustin, *De Civit. Dei*, vii. 9.

[2] Acts xvii. 23.

without any prefixed object and material mixture, he undertook a thing of no use; the human mind could never support itself floating in such an infinity of inform thoughts; it requires some certain image thereof to be presented according to its own model. The Divine Majesty has thus, in some sort, suffered Himself to be circumscribed in corporal limits for our advantage: His supernatural and celestial sacraments have signs of our earthly condition: His adoration is by sensible offices and words, for 'tis man that believes and prays. I omit the other arguments upon this subject; but a man would have much ado to make me believe that the sight of our crucifixes, that the picture of our Saviour's piteous passion, that the ornaments and ceremonious motions of our churches, that the voices accommodated to the devotion of our thoughts, and that emotion of the senses, do not warm the souls of the people with a religious passion of very advantageous effect.

Of those,[1] to whom they have given a body, as necessity required in that universal blindness, I should, I fancy, most incline to those who adored the sun,

"La lumière commune,
L'œil du monde; et si Dieu au chef porte des yeulx,
Les rayons du soleil sont ses yeulx radieux,
Qui donnent vie a touts, nous maintiennent et gardent,
Et les faicts des humains en ce monde regardent:
Ce beau, ce grand soleil, qui nous faict les saisons,
Selon qu'il entre ou sort de ses douze maisons;
Qui remplit l'univers de ses vertus cogneuës;
Qui d'un traict de ses yeulx nous dissipe les nuës:
L'esprit, l'ame du monde, ardent et flamboyant,
En la course d'un jour tout le ciel tournoyant;
Plein d'immense grandeur, rond, vagabond, et ferme;
Lequel tient dessoubs luy tout le monde pour terme:
En repos, sans repos; oysif, et sans sejour;
Fils aisné de nature, et le pere du jour:"[2]

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[1] *i.e.*, Divinities.

[2] Thus translated from Ronsard by Cotton:—

"The common light that shines indifferently
On all alike, the worlds enlightening eyes,
And if the Almighty ruler of the skies
Has eyes, the sunbeams are His radiant eyes,
That life to all impart, maintain, and guard,
And all men's actions upon earth regard.

forasmuch as besides this grandeur and beauty of his, 'tis the piece of this machine that we discover at the remotest distance from us, and, by that means, so little known that they were pardonable for entering into so great admiration and reverence of it.

Thales,[1] who first inquired into this matter, believed God to be a spirit, that made all things of water: Anaximander, that the gods were always dying and re-entering into life at divers seasons, and that there were an infinite number of worlds: Anaximenes, that the air was God, that he was produced and immense, ever moving. Anaxagoras was the first who held that the description and system of all things were conducted by the power and reason of an infinite spirit. Alcmæon gave divinity to the sun, moon, and stars, and to the soul. Pythagoras made God a spirit diffused through the nature of all things, from which our souls are extracted: Parmenides, a circle surrounding the heaven and supporting the world by the heat of light. Empedocles pronounced the four elements, of which all things are composed, to be gods: Protagoras had nothing to say, whether they were or not, or what they were: Democritus was one while of opinion that the images of objects and their orbs were gods; another while, the nature that darts out those images, and again, our science and intelligence. Plato divides his belief into several opinions: he says in his Timæus, that the father of the world cannot be named; in his Laws, that men are not to inquire into his being; and elsewhere, in the same books, he makes the world, the heavens, the stars, the earth, and our souls, gods; admitting, moreover, those which have been received by ancient institution in every republic. Xenophon reports a

> This great, this beautiful, and glorious sun,
> That seasons gives by revolution:
> That with his influence fills the universe,
> And with one glance does sullen shades disperse.
> Life, soul of the world, that flaming in his sphere,
> Surrounds the heavens in one day's career,
> Immensely great, moving, yet firm and round,
> Who the whole world below has fixed his bound,
> At rest without rest, idle without stay.
> Nature's first son, and father of the day."

[1] Cicero, De Nat. Deor., i. 10, &c.

like perplexity in Socrates' doctrine; one while, that men are not to inquire into the form of God, and presently makes him maintain that the sun is God, and the soul, God; first, that there is but one God, and afterwards that there are many. Speusippus, the nephew of Plato, makes God a certain power governing all things, and that it is animal. Aristotle, one while says it is the mind, and another while the world; now he gives this world another master, and again makes God the heat of heaven. Xenocrates makes eight; five named amongst the planets, the sixth composed of all the fixed stars, as of so many members; the seventh and the eighth, the sun and the moon. Heraclides Ponticus does nothing but float in his opinions, and finally deprives God of sense and makes him shift from one form to another: and at last says, that 'tis heaven and earth. Theophrastus wanders in the same irresolution amongst his various fancies, attributing the superintendence of the world one while to the understanding, another while to heaven, and then to the stars: Strato says 'tis nature having the power of generation, augmentation and diminution, without form and sentiment: Zeno says 'tis the law of nature commanding good and prohibiting evil, which law is animal; and abolishes the accustomed gods, Jupiter, Juno, and Vesta: Diogenes Apolloniates says 'tis air. Xenophanes makes God round, seeing and hearing, not breathing, and having nothing in common with human nature. Aristo thinks the form of God to be incomprehensible, deprives Him of sense, and knows not whether He be animal or something else: Cleanthes one while supposes Him to be reason, another while the world, then the soul of nature, and then the supreme heat surrounding and enveloping all things. Perseus, Zeno's disciple, was of opinion that men have given the title of gods to such as have added any notable advantage to human life, and even to profitable things themselves. Chrysippus made a confused heap of all the preceding lucubrations, and reckons, amongst a thousand forms of gods that he makes, the men also that have been deified. Diagoras and Theodorus flatly denied that there were any gods at all. Epicurus makes the gods shining, transparent, and perflable,[1] lodged, as

[1] That can be blown through.

betwixt two forts, betwixt two worlds, secure from blows; clothed in a human figure and with such members as we have, which members are to them of no use:

> "Ego deum genus esse semper dixi, et dicam cœlitum;
> Sed eos non curare opinor, quid agat humanum genus."[1]

Trust to your philosophy, my masters, and brag that you have found the bean in the cake, with all this rattle from so many philosophical heads! The perplexity of so many worldly forms has gained this for me, that manners and opinions contrary to mine do not so much displease as instruct me; nor so much make me proud, as they humble me in comparing them; and all other choice than what comes from the express and immediate hand of God, seems to me a choice of very little prerogative. The politics of the world are no less opposed upon this subject than the schools: by which we may understand that fortune itself is not more variable and diverse, nor more blind and inconsiderate, than our reason. The things that are most unknown are the most proper to be deified; wherefore, to make gods of ourselves, as the ancients did, exceeds the extremest weakness of understanding. I should much rather have gone along with those who adored the serpent, the dog, or the ox; forasmuch as their nature and their being are less known to us, and that we are more at liberty to imagine what we please of those beasts, and to attribute to them extraordinary faculties; but to have made gods of our own condition, of which we should know the imperfection, and to have attributed to them desire, anger, revenge, marriages, generation, alliances, love and jealousy, our members and bones, our fevers and pleasures, our death and obsequies, this must needs proceed from a marvellous intoxication of human understanding:

> "Quæ procul usque adeo divino ab numine distant,
> Inque deum numero quæ sint indigna videri."[2]

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[1] "I have ever thought, and still think, there are gods above, but I do not conceive that they care what men do."—ENNIUS, apud, Cicero, *ubi supra*.

[2] "Which things are so remote from the divine nature, that they are unworthy to be ranked among the gods."—LUCRETIUS, v. 123.

"Formæ, ætates, vestitus, ornatus noti sunt: genera, conjugia, cognationes, omniaque traducta ad similitudinem imbecillitatis humanæ; nam et perturbatis animis inducuntur; accipimus enim deorum cupiditates, ægritudines, iracundias;"[1] as having attributed divinity not only to faith, virtue, honour, concord, liberty, victory, piety, but also to voluptuousness, fraud, death, envy, old age, misery; to fear, fever, ill fortune, and other injuries of our frail and transitory life:

> "Quid juvat hoc, templis nostros inducere mores?
> O curvæ in terris animæ, et cœlestium inanes!"[2]

The Egyptians, with an impudent prudence, interdicted, upon pain of hanging, that any one should say that their gods Serapis and Isis had formerly been men, and yet no one was ignorant that they had been such; and their effigies, represented with the finger upon the mouth, signified, says Varro,[3] this mysterious decree to their priests, to conceal their mortal original, as it must, by necessary consequence, annul all the veneration paid to them. Seeing that man so much desired to equal himself to God, he had done better, says Cicero,[4] to have attracted the divine conditions to himself, and have drawn them down hither below, than to send his corruption and misery up on high: but, in truth, he has in several ways done both the one and the other, with like vanity of opinion.

When the philosophers search narrowly into the hierarchy of their gods, and make a great bustle about distinguishing their alliances, offices, and power, I cannot believe they speak with any seriousness. When Plato describes Pluto's verger to us, and the bodily pleasures or pains that await us after the ruin and annihilation of our bodies, and accommodates them to the notions we have of them in this life:

[1] "Their forms, ages, clothes, and ornaments are known: their descents, marriages, and kindred, and all appropriated to the similitude of human weakness; for they are represented to us with anxious minds, and we read of the lusts, sickness, and anger of the gods."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, ii. 28.

[2] "Into our temples to what end introduce our own corrupt manners? O souls, bending to the earth, devoid of all heavenly sentiments!"—PERSIUS, ii. 61, 62.

[3] Cited by St. Augustin, De Civit. Dei, xviii. 5.

[4] Tusc. Quæs., i. 26.

"Secreti celant calles, et myrtea circum
Sylva tegit; curæ non ipsa in morte relinquunt;" [1]

when Mohammed promises his followers a paradise hung with tapestry, adorned with gold and precious stones, furnished with wenches of excelling beauty, rare wines and delicate dishes, I easily discern that these are mockers who accommodate their promises to our stupidity, to attract and allure us by hopes and opinions suitable to our mortal appetite. And yet some amongst us are fallen into the like error, promising to themselves, after the resurrection, a terrestrial and temporal life, accompanied with all sorts of worldly conveniences and pleasures. Can we believe that Plato, he who had such heavenly conceptions, and was so conversant with Divinity as thence to derive the name of the divine Plato, ever thought that the poor creature, man, had anything in him applicable to that incomprehensible power? and that he believed that the weak holds we are able to take were capable, or the force of our understanding robust enough to participate of eternal beatitude or pain? We should then tell him, on behalf of human reason: if the pleasures thou dost promise us in the other life are of the same kind that I have enjoyed here below, that has nothing in common with infinity: though all my five natural senses should be loaded with pleasure and my soul full of all the contentment it could hope or desire, we know what all this amounts to; all this would be nothing: if there be anything of mine there, there is nothing divine; if it be no more than what may belong to our present condition, it cannot be reckoned; all contentment of mortals is mortal; the recognition of our parents, children, and friends, if that can touch and delight us in the other world, if there it still continue a satisfaction to us, we still remain in earthly and infinite conveniences: we cannot, as we ought, conceive the grandeur of those high and divine promises, if we can in any sort conceive them; to have a worthy imagination of them, we must imagine them unimaginable, inexplicable, and incomprehensible, and absolutely another thing than any in our miserable experience. "Eye hath not seen," says St. Paul, "nor ear

[1] "Secret paths hide them, and myrtle groves environ them; their cares do not leave them when they die."—*Æneid*, vi. 443.

heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." [1] And if to render us capable of them, our being be reformed and changed (as thou, Plato, sayest by thy purifications), it must be so extreme and total a change that, by physical doctrine, it will be no more us;

> "Hector erat tunc cum bello certabat; at ille
> Tractus ab Æmonio, non erat Hector, equo:" [2]

it must be something else that must receive these recompenses:

> "Quod mutatur . . . dissolvitur; interit ergo;
> Trajiciuntur enim partes, atque ordine migrant." [3]

For, in Pythagoras' metempsychosis, and the change of habitation that he imagined in souls, can we believe that the lion in whom the soul of Cæsar is enclosed espouses Cæsar's passions, or that the lion is he? If it were still Cæsar, they would be in the right who, controverting this opinion with Plato, reproach him that the son might be seen to ride his mother transformed into a mule, and the like absurdities. And can we believe that in the mutations that are made of the bodies of animals into others of the same kind, the new comers are not other than their predecessors? From the ashes of a phœnix a worm, they say,[4] is engendered, and from that another phœnix; who can imagine that this second phœnix is not other than the first? We see our silk worms as it were die and wither; and from this withered body a butterfly is produced, and from that another worm; how ridiculous would it be to imagine that this were still the first? that which has once ceased to be is no more:

> "Nec, si materiam nostram collegerit ætas
> Post obitum, rursumque redegerit, ut sita nunc est,

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[1] 1 Corinthians ii. 9, after Isaiah lxiv. 4.

[2] "He was Hector whilst he was fighting; but when dragged by Achilles' steeds, he was no longer Hector."—OVID, *Trist.*, iii. 11, 27.

[3] "What is changed is dissolved, and therefore perishes; the parts are separated, and depart from their order."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 756.

[4] Pliny, Nat. Hist., x. 2.

Atque iterum nobis fuerint data lumina vitæ,
Pertineat quidquam tamen ad nos id quoque factum;
Interrupta semel cum sit repetentia nostra."[1]

And, Plato, when thou sayest, in another place, that it shall be the spiritual part of man that will be concerned in the fruition of the recompenses of another life, thou tellest us a thing wherein there is as little appearance of truth:

"Scilicet, avolsis radicibus, ut nequit ullam
Dispicere ipse oculus rem, seorsum corpore toto;"[2]

for, by this account, it would no more be man, nor consequently us, who should be concerned in this enjoyment: for we are composed of two principally essential parts, the separation of which is the death and ruin of our being:

"Inter enim jecta est vitai pausa, vageque
Deerrarunt passim motus ab sensibus omnes:"[3]

we cannot say that the man suffers when the worms feed upon his members and that the earth consumes them:

"Et nihil hoc ad nos, qui coitu conjugioque
Corporis atque animæ consistimus uniter apti."[4]

Moreover, upon what foundation of their justice can the gods take notice of or reward man after his death, for his good and virtuous actions, since it was they themselves who put them in the way and mind to do them? And why should they be offended at and punish him for evil actions, since they themselves have created him in so frail a condition, and that, with one glance of their will, they might prevent him from evil doing? Might not Epicurus, with great colour of human reason, object this to Plato, did he not often save himself with this sentence: "That it is

[1] "Nor, though time should collect after death our atoms, and restore them to the form they had before, and give us again new light of life, would that new figure concern us at all; the sense of our being, once interrupted, is gone."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 859.

[2] "No more than eyes once torn from their sockets can ever after see anything."—*Ibid*, 562.

[3] "For, when life is extinct, all motions of sense are dispersed and banished."—*Ibid*, 872.

[4] "That is nothing to us whose being solely consists in the strict union of body and soul."—*Ibid*, 857.

impossible to establish anything certain of the immortal nature by the mortal?" She does nothing but err throughout, but especially when she meddles with divine things. Who more evidently perceives this than we? For although we have given her certain and infallible principles, and though we have enlightened her steps with the sacred lamp of the truth that it has pleased God to communicate to us, we daily see, nevertheless, that if she swerve never so little from the ordinary path, and that she stray from or wander out of the way set out and beaten by the Church, how immediately she loses, confounds, and fetters herself, tumbling and floating in this vast, turbulent, and waving sea of human opinions, without restraint and without any determinate end: so soon as she loses that great and common road she enters into a labyrinth of a thousand several paths.

Man cannot be anything but what he is, nor imagine beyond the reach of his capacity. "'Tis a greater presumption," says Plutarch,[1] "in them who are but men to attempt to speak and discourse of the gods and demi-gods, than it is in a man, utterly ignorant of music, to judge of singing; or in a man who never saw a camp to dispute about arms and martial affairs, presuming, by some light conjecture, to understand the effects of an art to which he is totally a stranger." Antiquity, I fancy, thought to put a complement upon and to add something to the divine grandeur in assimilating it to man, investing it with his faculties and adorning it with his fine humours and most shameful necessities: offering to it our aliments to eat, our dances, mummeries, and farces to divert it, our vestments to cover it, and our houses to inhabit; caressing it with the odours of incense and the sounds of music, with festoons and nosegays; and, to accommodate it to our vicious passions, flattering its justice with inhuman vengeance, delighting it with the ruin and dissipating of things by it created and preserved: as Tiberius Sempronius who burned the rich spoils and arms he had gained from the enemy in Sardinia as a sacrifice to Vulcan, and Paulus Æmilius those of Macedonia to Mars and Minerva: and as Alexander, arriving at the Indian

[1] Why Divine Justice sometimes defers Punishment

Ocean, threw several great vessels of gold into the sea in favour of Thetis, and, moreover, loaded her altars with a slaughter, not of innocent beasts only, but of men also; as several nations, and ours amongst the rest, were ordinarily used to do; and I believe there is no nation under the sun that has not done the same:

"Sulmone creatos
Quatuor hic juvenes, totidem, quos educat Ufens,
Viventes rapit, inferias quos immolet umbris."[1]

The Getæ hold themselves to be immortal, and that death is nothing but a journey to Zamolxis, their god. Once in every five years they despatch some one amongst them to him, to entreat of him such necessaries as they require. This envoy is chosen by lot, and the form of his despatch, after having been instructed by word of mouth what he is to say, is, that of those present three hold out so many javelins, against which the rest throw his body with all their force. If he happen to be wounded in a mortal part and that he immediately die, 'tis reputed a certain sign of divine favour; if he escape he is looked upon as a wicked and execrable wretch, and another is deputed after the same manner in his stead. Amestris, the wife of Xerxes,[2] having grown old, caused at once fourteen young men of the best families of Persia to be buried alive, according to the religion of the country, to gratify some infernal deity. And to this day the idols of Themixtitan are cemented with the blood of little children, and they delight in no sacrifice but of these pure and infantine souls: a justice thirsty of innocent blood!

"Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum."[3]

The Carthaginians immolated their own children to Saturn; and such as had none of their own bought of others,[4] the father and mother being further obliged to attend the ceremony with a gay and contented countenance.

[1] "Four sons of Sulmo, and as many more whom Ufens bred, he seized alive, to offer them a sacrifice to the infernal gods."—*Æneid*, x. 517.

[2] Herod. vii.

[3] "Religion can persuade men to so many ills and mischiefs."—LUCRETIUS, i. 102.

[4] Plutarch, On Superstition.

It was a strange fancy to seek to gratify the divine goodness with our affliction: like the Lacedæmonians who regaled their Diana with the tormenting of young boys, whom they caused to be whipped for her sake, very often to death:[1] it was a savage humour to think to gratify the Architect by the subversion of His building, and to think to take away the punishment due to the guilty by punishing the innocent; and that poor Iphigenia, at the port of Aulis, should by her death and sacrifice acquit towards God the whole army of the Greeks from all the crimes they had committed;

> "Et casta incesto, nubendi tempore in ipso
> Hostia concideret mactatu mœsta parentis;"[2]

and that those two noble and generous souls of the two Decii, father and son, to incline the favour of the gods to be propitious to the affairs of Rome, should throw themselves headlong into the thickest of the enemy. "Quæ fuit tanta deorum iniquitas, ut placari populo Romano non possent, nisi tales viri occidissent?[3] To which may be added, that it is not for the criminal to cause himself to be scourged according to his own measure nor at his own time; but that it wholly belongs to the judge, who considers nothing as chastisement but the pain he appoints, and cannot deem that punishment which proceeds from the consent of him who suffers: the divine vengeance presupposes an absolute dissent in us, both for its justice and our own penalty. And therefore it was a ridiculous humour of Polycrates the tyrant of Samos,[4] who, to interrupt the continued course of his good fortune and to balance it, went and threw the dearest and most precious jewel he had into the sea, fancying by this voluntary mishap he bribed and satisfied the revolution and vicissitude of fortune; and she, to mock his folly, ordered it so that the same jewel came again into his hands, found in the belly of a fish. And then to what end

[1] Plutarch, Notable Sayings of the Lacedæmonians.

[2] "And that the chaste girl, on the very eve of her nuptials, should die, a sad victim, immolated by her father."—LUCRETIUS, i. 99.

[3] "How great an injustice in the gods was it that they could not be reconciled to the people of Rome unless such men perished?"—CICERO, *De Nat. Deor.*, iii. 6.

[4] Herodotus, iii. 41.

are those tearings and demembrations of the Corybantes, the Menades, and in our times of the Mohammedans, who slash their faces, bosoms, and members to gratify their prophet: seeing that the offence lies in the will, not in the breast, eyes, genitories, in plumpness, in the shoulders, or the throat? "Tantus est perturbatæ mentis, et sedibus suis pulsæ furor, ut sic dii placentur, quemadmodum ne homines quidem sæviunt." [1] The use of this natural contexture has not only respect to us, but also to the service of God and of other men; and 'tis as unjust wilfully to wound or hurt it, as to kill ourselves upon any pretence whatever; it seems to be great cowardice and treason to exercise cruelty upon and to destroy the functions of the body, stupid and servile, in order to spare the soul the trouble of governing them according to reason; "ubi iratos deos timent, qui sic propitios habere merentur. . . . In regiæ libidinis voluptatem castrati sunt quidam; sed nemo sibi, ne vir esset, jubente domino, manus intulit." [2] So did they fill their religion with many ill effects:

"Sæpius olim
Religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta." [3]

Now nothing about us can, in any sort, be compared or likened unto the divine nature that will not blemish and tarnish it with so much imperfection. How can that infinite beauty, power, and goodness admit of any correspondence or similitude to so abject a thing as we are, without extreme wrong and dishonour to His divine greatness? "Infirmum Dei fortius est hominibus: et stultum Dei sapientius est hominibus." [4] Stilpo the philosopher being asked whether

[1] "So great is the fury and madness of troubled minds when once displaced from the seat of reason: as if the gods should be appeased with what even men are not so mad as to approve."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civit. Dei*, vi. 10.

[2] "Where are they so afraid of the anger of the gods as to merit their favour at that rate? Some, indeed, have been made eunuchs for the lust of princes: but no man at his master's command has put his own hand to unman himself."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *ubi supra*, after Seneca.

[3] "In older times religion inspired great and impious crimes."—LUCRETIUS, i. 83.

[4] "For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."—1 *Cor.* i. 25.

the gods were delighted with our adorations and sacrifices: "You are indiscreet," answered he; "let us withdraw apart if you talk of such things."[1] Nevertheless, we prescribe Him bounds, we keep His power beseiged by our reasons (I call reason our reveries and dreams with the dispensation of philosophy, which says, that the wicked man, and even the fool, go mad by reason, but 'tis by a particular form of reason); we will subject Him to the vain and feeble appearances of our understanding; Him who has made both us and our understanding. Because nothing is made of nothing, God, therefore, could not have made the world without matter. What! has God put into our hands the keys and most secret springs of His power; is He obliged not to exceed the limits of our knowledge? Put the case, O man, that thou hast been able here to mark some footsteps of His effects: dost thou, therefore, think that He has therein employed all He can, and has crowded all His forms and all His ideas in this work? Thou seest nothing but the order and regulation of this little vault wherein thou art lodged—if thou dost see so much—whereas His divinity has an infinite jurisdiction beyond; this part is nothing in comparison of the whole:

> "Omnia cum cœlo, terraque, marique,
> Nil sunt ad summam summai totius omnem:"[2]

'tis a municipal law that thou allegest; thou knowest not what is the universal. Tie thyself to that to which thou art subject, but not Him; He is not of thy brotherhood, thy fellow-citizen, or companion. If He has in some sort communicated Himself unto thee, 'tis not to debase Himself to thy littleness, nor to make thee controller of His power; the human body cannot fly to the clouds. 'Tis for thee the sun runs without resting every day his ordinary course: the bounds of the seas and the earth cannot be confounded; the water is unstable and without firmness; a wall, unless it be broken, is impenetrable to a solid body; a man cannot preserve his life in the flames; he cannot be both in heaven and upon earth, and corporally in a thousand places at once.

[1] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 117.

[2] "All things, heaven, earth, and sea, fall short in the account with the totality of the great All."—LUCRETIUS, v. 679.

'Tis for thee, that He has made these rules; 'tis thee, that they concern; He manifested to the Christians, that He enfranchised them all, when it pleased Him. And, in truth, why, almighty as He is, should He have limited His power within any certain bounds? In favour of whom should He have renounced His privilege? Thy reason has in no other thing more of likelihood and foundation, than in that wherein it persuades thee that there is a plurality of worlds;

> "Terramque, et solem, lunam, mare, cætera quæ sunt,
> Non esse unica, sed numero magis innumerali:"[1]

the most eminent minds of elder times believed it, and some of this age of ours, compelled by the appearances of human reason, do the same; forasmuch as in this fabric that we behold there is nothing single and one,

> "Quum in summa res nulla sit una,
> Unica quæ gignatur, et unica solaque crescat,"[2]

and that all the kinds are multiplied in some number or other; by which it seems not to be likely that God should have made this work only without a companion, and that the matter of this form should have been totally exhausted in this sole individual;

> "Quare etiam atque etiam tales fateare necesse est,
> Esse alios alibi congressus materiai,
> Qualis hic est, avido complexu quem tenet æther:"[3]

especially if it be a living creature, which its motions render so credible that Plato affirms it,[4] and that many of our people either confirm it or do not venture to deny it: no more than that ancient opinion, that the heaven, the stars, and other members of the world, are creatures composed of body and soul, mortal in respect of their composition, but immortal by the determination of the Creator.

[1] "Earth, sun, moon, sea, and the rest that are, are not single, but rather innumerable."—LUCRETIUS, ii. 1085.

[2] "Since there is nothing single in this mighty mass, that can alone beget, or alone increase."—*Ibid.*, 1077.

[3] "Wherefore it is quite necessary to confess that there must elsewhere be the like aggregation of matter, just as that which ether holds in strict embrace."—*Ibid.*, 1064.

[4] In the Timæus.

Now, if there be many worlds, as Democritus, Epicurus, and almost all philosophy has believed, how do we know that the principles and rules of this of ours in like manner concern the rest? They may, peradventure, have another form and another polity. Epicurus[1] supposes them, either like or unlike. We see in this world an infinite difference and variety, merely by distance of places; neither corn nor wine, nor any of our animals are to be seen in that new corner of the world discovered by our fathers; 'tis all there another thing; and, in times past, do but consider in how many parts of the world they had no knowledge either of Bacchus or Ceres. If Pliny and Herodotus are to be believed, there are, in certain places, kinds of men very little resembling us; and there are mongrel and ambiguous forms, betwixt the human and brutal natures: there are countries, where men are born without heads, having their mouth and eyes in their breast;[2] where they are all hermaphrodites; where they go on all fours; where they have but one eye in the forehead, and a head more like that of a dog than like one of ours.[3] Where they are half fish the lower part, and live in the water; where the women bear at five years old, and live but eight; where the head and skin of the forehead are so hard, that a sword will not enter it, but rebounds; where men have no beards; nations that know not the use of fire; and others that eject their seed of a black colour.[4] What shall we say of those that naturally change themselves into wolves, colts, and then into men again?[5] And if it be true, as Plutarch says,[6] that in some place of the Indies, there are men without mouths, who nourish themselves with the smell of certain odours, how many of our descriptions are false? Man, at this rate, becomes more than ludicrous and, peradventure, quite incapable of reason and society; the disposition and cause of our internal structure would, for the most part, be to no purpose.

Moreover, how many things are there in our own knowledge that oppose those fine rules we have cut out for and prescribed to nature? And yet we must undertake to circum-

[1] Diogenes Laertius, x. 85.
[2] Herodotus, iv. 4.
[3] Pliny, Nat. Hist., viii.
[4] Herodotus, iii.
[5] Pliny (viii.) merely mentions these stories as impudent lies.
[6] "On the Face of the Moon."—PLINY, *Nat. Hist.*, vii.

scribe God himself! How many things do we call miraculous and contrary to nature? this is done by every nation and by every man, according to the measure of their ignorance; how many occult properties and quintessences do we discover? For, with us, to go "according to nature," is no more but to go "according to our intelligence," as far as that is able to follow, and as far as we are able to see into it: all beyond that must be monstrous and irregular. Now, by this account, all things shall be monstrous to the wisest and most understanding men; for human reason has persuaded them that it has no manner of ground or foundation, not so much as to be assured that snow is white; and Anaxagoras affirmed it to be black:[1] if there be anything, or if there be nothing: if there be knowledge or ignorance, which Metrodorus of Chios denied that man was able to determine;[2] or whether we live, as Euripides doubts, "whether the life we live is life, or whether that we call death be not life:" ...

> "Τίς δ' οἶδεν εἰ ζῆν τοῦθ', ὃ κέκληται θανεῖν,
> Τὸ ζῆν δὲ, θνήσκειν ἔστι·"[3]

and not without some appearance: for why do we, from this instant which is but a flash in the infinite course of an eternal night, and so short an interruption of our perpetual and natural condition, death possessing all that passed before and all the future of this moment, and also a good part of the moment itself, derive the title of being? Others swear there is no motion at all,[4] as the followers of Melissus, and that nothing stirs; for if there be nothing but One, neither can that spherical motion be of any use to him, nor the motion from one place to another, as Plato proves; others say there's neither generation nor corruption in nature. Protagorus[5] says that there is nothing in nature but doubt; that a man may equally dispute of all things. Nausiphanes, that of things which seem to be, nothing is more than it is not: that there is nothing certain but uncertainty;[6] Par-

[1] Cicero, Acad., ii. 23 and 31; Ep. ad Quint. Frat., ii. 13.
[2] Idem, Acad., ib.; Sextus Empiricus, p. 146.
[3] See Plato, Gorgias, p. 300; Diogenes Laertius, Life of Pyrrho; Sextus Empiricus Pyrrh. Hyp., iii. 24.
[4] Diogenes Laertius, Life of Melissus.
[5] Ibid., Life of Protagoras.
[6] Seneca, Ep. 88.

menides, that of that which it seems there is no one thing in general; that there is but One;[1] Zeno,[2] that there's no One, and that there is nothing: if there were One, it would either be in another or in itself; if it be in another, they are two; if it be in itself, they are yet two; the comprehending and the comprehended. According to these doctrines, the nature of things is no other than a shadow, either vain or absolutely false.

This way of speaking in a Christian man has ever seemed to me very indiscreet and irreverent: "God cannot die; God cannot contradict Himself; God cannot do this, or that." I do not like to have the divine power so limited by the laws of men's mouths; and the idea which presents itself to us in those propositions, ought to be more religiously and reverently expressed.

Our speaking has its failings and defects, as well as all the rest: grammar is that which creates most disturbance in the world: our suits only spring from disputation as to the interpretation of laws; and most wars proceed from the inability of ministers clearly to express the conventions and treaties of amity among princes. How many quarrels, and those of how great importance, has the doubt of the meaning of this syllable *Hoc* created in the world?[3] Let us take the conclusion that logic itself presents us as manifestly clear: if you say it is fine weather, and that you say true, it is, then, fine weather. Is not this a very certain form of speaking? and yet it will deceive us; that it will do so, let us follow the example: if you say, I lie, and that you say true, then you do lie. The art, reason and force of the conclusion of this are the same with the other; and yet we are gravelled. The Pyrrhonian philosophers, I see, cannot express their general conception in any kind of speaking; for they would require a new language on purpose: ours

[1] Aristotle, Metaphys., lib. i. c. 5. Cicero, Quæst. Acad., iv. 37, attributes the saying to Xenophanes.

[2] "This Zeno must be the Zeno of Eleus, the disciple of Parmenides. The Pyrrhonians reckoned him one of their sect. Diogenes Laertius, Life of Pyrrho, lib. ix. s. 72. Montaigne here has also copied Seneca, Ep. 88, where after these words, 'Were I to believe Parmenides, there is nothing besides one,' he adds immediately, 'If Zeno, there is not so much as one.'"—COSTE.

[3] In allusion to the dispute as to transubstantiation.

is all formed of affirmative propositions, which are totally hostile to them; insomuch that when they say, "I doubt," they are presently taken by the throat, to make them confess that at least they know and are assured of this, that they do doubt. And so they have been compelled to shelter themselves under this medicinal comparison, without which their humour would be inexplicable: when they pronounce, "I know not;" or, "I doubt;" they say that this proposition carries of itself with the rest, no more nor less than rhubarb that drives out the ill humours and carries itself off with them.[1] This fancy is more certainly understood by interrogation: What do I know? as I bear it in the emblem of a balance.

See what use we make of this irreverent way of speaking:[2] in the present disputes about our religion, if you press the adversaries too hard, they will roundly tell you, "that it is not in the power of God to make it so that His body should be in paradise and upon earth, and in several places at once." And see what advantage the old scoffer[3] makes of this! "At least," says he, "it is no little consolation to man to see that God cannot do all things; for he cannot kill himself though he would, which is the greatest privilege we have in our condition: he cannot make mortals immortal, nor revive the dead, nor make it so that he who has lived has not, nor that he who has had honours, has not had them, having no other power over the past than that of oblivion. And that the comparison of a man to God may yet be made out by pleasant examples, he cannot order it so that twice ten shall not be twenty." This is what he says, and what a Christian ought to take heed shall not escape his lips; whereas, on the contrary, it seems as if all men studied this impudent kind of blasphemous language, to reduce God to their own measure:

> "Cras vel atra
> Nube polum Pater occupato,
> Vel sole puro, non tamen irritum,
> Quodcumque retro est, efficiet, neque

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[1] Diogenes Laertius, ix. 76.
[2] *i.e.*, That God cannot do this or that.
[3] "That scoffer Pliny," ed. of 1580.

Diffinget, infectumque reddet,
Quod fugiens semel hora vexit."[1]

When we say that the infinity of ages, as well past as to come, are but one instant with God; that His goodness, wisdom, and power are the same with His essence, our mouths speak it, but our understandings apprehend it not. And yet such is our outrageous opinion of ourselves, that we must make the divinity pass through our sieve; and from this proceed all the dreams and errors with which the world abounds, when we reduce and weigh in our balance a thing so far above our poise. "Mirum, quo procedat improbitas cordis humani, parvulo aliquo invitata successu."[2] How magisterially and insolently do the Stoics reprove Epicurus for maintaining that the truly good and happy Being appertained only to God, and that the Sage had nothing but a shadow and resemblance of it? How daringly have they bound God to destiny (a thing, that, by my consent, none that bears the name of a Christian shall ever do again); while Thales, Plato and Pythagoras have enslaved him to necessity. This arrogance of attempting to discover God with our weak eyes, has been the cause that an eminent person of our nation,[3] has attributed to the divinity a corporal form; and is the reason of what happens amongst us every day of attributing to God important events, by a special appointment; because they sway with us, they conclude that they also sway with Him, and that He has a more intent and vigilant regard to them than to others of less moment, or of ordinary course: "Magna Dii curant; parva negligunt:"[4] observe his example; he will clear this to you by his reason: "Nec in regnis quidem reges omnia minima curant;"[5] as if to that King of kings it were

[1] "Let it shine or rain to-morrow, this cannot alter the past, nor uncreate and render void that which was enjoyed yesterday." —HORACE, *Od.*, iii. 29, 43.

[2] "Tis wonderful to what the wickedness of man's heart will proceed, if elevated with the least success."—PLINY, *Nat. Hist.*, ii. 23.

[3] Tertullian.

[4] "The gods concern themselves with great matters, but slight the small."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, ii. 66.

[5] "Neither do kings in their administration take notice of minor matters."—*Idem, ibid.*, iii. 35.

more and less to subvert a kingdom or to move the leaf of a tree: or as if His providence acted after another manner in inclining the event of a battle than in the leap of a flea. The hand of His government is laid upon everything after the same manner, with the same power and order: our interest does nothing towards it; our inclinations and measures sway nothing with Him: "Deus ita artifex magnus in magnis, ut minor non sit in parvis."[1] Our arrogance sets this blasphemous comparison ever before us. Because our employments are a burthen to us, Strato has courteously been pleased to exempt the gods from all offices, as their priests are; he makes nature produce and support all things; and with her weights and motions make up the several parts of the world, discharging human nature from the awe of divine judgments: "Quod beatum æternumque sit, id nec habere negotii quidquam, nec exhibere alteri."[2] Nature wills that in like things there should be a like relation: the infinite number of mortals, therefore, concludes a like number of immortals; the infinite things that kill and destroy presuppose as many that preserve and profit. As the souls of the gods without tongue, eyes, or ear, each of them feels amongst themselves what the others feel, and judge our thoughts; so the souls of men, when at liberty and loosed from the body, either by sleep, or some ecstasy, divine, foretell, and see things, which, whilst joined to the body, they could not see. "Men," says St. Paul, "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man."[3] Do but take notice of the jugglery in the ancient deification: after the grand and stately pomp of the funeral, so soon as the fire began to mount to the top of the pyramid and to catch hold of the hearse where the body lay, they, at the same time, turned out an eagle, which, flying upward, signified that the soul went into Paradise; we have still a thousand medals, and

[1] "God, so great an artificer in great things, is no less so in the least."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civ. Dei*, xi. 22.

[2] "What is blessed and eternal, has neither any business itself nor gives any to another."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, i. 17.

[3] Romans v. 22, 23.

particularly of that virtuous Faustina,[1] where this eagle is represented carrying these deified souls with their heels upwards, towards heaven. 'Tis pity that we should fool ourselves with our own fopperies and inventions;

"Quod finxere, timent:"[2]

like children who are frightened with the face of their playfellow that they themselves have smeared and smutted, "Quasi quidquam infelicius sit homine, cui sua figmenta dominantur."[3] 'Tis far from honouring Him who made us, to honour him whom we have made. Augustus had more temples than Jupiter, served with as much religion and belief of miracles. The Thasians, in return for the benefits they had received from Agesilaus, coming to bring him word that they had canonised him: "Has your nation," said he to them,[4] "the power to make gods of whom they please? Pray first deify some one amongst yourselves, and when I see what advantage he has by it, I will thank you for your offer." Man is certainly stark mad; he cannot make a flea, and yet he will be making gods by dozens. Hear what Trismegistus says in praise of our sufficiency: "Of all the wonderful things, it surmounts all wonder, that man could find out the divine nature and make it." And take here the arguments of the school of philosophy itself,

"Nosse cui divos et cœli numina soli,
Aut soli nescire, datum:"[5]

"if there be a God,[6] He is a corporeal creature; if He be a corporeal creature, He has sense; and if He has sense, He is subject to corruption. If He be without a body, He is without a soul, and consequently without action: and if He have a body it is perishable." Is not here a triumph? "We are incapable of having made the world; there must, then,

[1] The term *virtuous* is here, of course, applied ironically.
[2] "They fear what they themselves have invented."—LUCAN, i. 486.
[3] "As if anything could be more unhappy than man, who is domineered over by his own imagination."
[4] Plutarch, Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.
[5] "To whom alone it is given to know the deities of heaven, or know that we can know them not."—LUCAN, i. 452.
[6] This passage is taken from Cicero, De Natura Deor., ii. and iii.

be some more excellent nature that has put a hand to the work. It were a foolish and ridiculous arrogance to esteem ourselves the most perfect thing of this universe: there must, then, be something that is better and more perfect, and that is God. When you see a stately and stupendous edifice, though you do not know who is the owner of it, you would yet conclude it was not built for rats: and this divine structure that we behold of the celestial palace, have we not reason to believe that it is the residence of some possessor, who is much greater than we? Is not the highest always the most worthy; and we are placed lowest to Him. Nothing without a soul and without reason can produce a living creature capable of reason; the world produces us; the world, then, has soul and reason. Every part of us is less than we: we are part of the world; the world, therefore, is endued with wisdom and reason, and that more abundantly than we. 'Tis a fine thing to have a great government: the government of the world, then, appertains to some happy nature. The stars do us no harm: they are, then, full of goodness. We have need of nourishment; then so have the gods also; and they feed upon the vapours of the earth. Worldly goods are not goods to God; therefore they are not goods to us. Offending, and being offended, are equally testimonies of imbecility: 'tis, therefore, folly to fear God. God is good by His nature; man by his industry, which is more. The divine and human wisdom have no other distinction, but that the first is eternal: but duration is no accession to wisdom; therefore, we are companions. We have life, reason, and liberty; we esteem goodness, charity, and justice: these qualities, then, are in him."[1] In fine, the building and destroying, the conditions of the divinity, are forged by man, according as they bear relation to himself. What a pattern! what a model! Let us stretch, let us raise and swell human qualities as much as we please: puff up thyself, poor creature, yet more and more, and more;

"Non, si te ruperis, inquit."[2]

"Profecto non Deum, quem cogitare non possunt, sed semet

[1] The preceding passages are taken from Cicero, De Natura Deor., lib. ii., *passim*.

[2] "Not if thou burst, said he."—HORACE, *Sat.* ii. 3, 19.

ipsos pro illo cogitantes, non illum, sed seipsos, non illi, sed sibi comparant."[1] In natural things the effects but half relate to their causes: what about this? it is above the order of nature; its condition is too elevated, too remote, and too mighty to permit itself to be bound and fettered by our conclusions. 'Tis not through ourselves that we arrive at that place: our ways lie too low: we are no nearer heaven on the top of Mont Cenis, than at the bottom of the sea: take the distance with your astrolabe. They debase God even to the carnal knowledge of women, to so many times, to so many propagations: Paulina the wife of Saturninus, a matron of great reputation at Rome, thinking she lay with the god Serapis,[2] found herself in the arms of a lover of hers, through the pandarism of the priests of the temple. Varro, the most subtle and most learned of all the Latin authors, in his book of theology, writes[3] that the sacristan of Hercules' temple, throwing dice with one hand for himself and with the other for Hercules, played after that manner with him for a supper and a wench: if he won, at the expense of the offerings; if he lost, at his own. He lost, and paid the supper and the wench. Her name was Laurentina; she saw by night this god in her arms, who, moreover, told her that the first she met the next day should give her a heavenly reward; which proved to be Taruncius,[4] a rich young man who took her home to his house and in time left her his heiress. She, in her turn, thinking to do a thing that would be pleasing to this god, left the people of Rome her heirs, and therefore had divine honours voted to her. As if it were not sufficient that Plato was originally descended from the gods by a double line, and that he had Neptune for the common father of his race,[5] it was certainly believed at Athens that Aristo,

[1] "Certainly they do not imagine God, whom they cannot imagine; but they imagine themselves in His stead: they do not compare Him, but themselves, not to Him, but to themselves."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civit. Dei*, xii. 15.

[2] Or Anubis, according to Josephus, Jewish Antiquities, lib. xviii. c. 4.

[3] St. Augustin, De Civit. Dei, vi.

[4] Or Tarutius, Plutarch, Life of Romulus, c. 3, who calls the lady Larentia, and says that Tarutius was a very old man.

[5] Diogenes Laertius, Life of Plato, book iii.

having a mind to enjoy the fair Perictione, could not, and was warned by the god Apollo in a dream to leave her unpolluted and untouched till she should first be brought to bed.[1] These were the father and mother of Plato. How many ridiculous stories are there of like cuckoldings committed by the gods against poor mortals? and how many husbands injuriously disgraced in favour of their children? In the Mohammedan religon, there are plenty of Merlins[2] found by the belief of the people, that is to say, children without fathers, spiritual, divinely conceived in the wombs of virgins, and who bear a name that signifies as much in their language.

We are to observe that to every creature nothing is more dear and estimable than its own being; the lion, the eagle, dolphin prizing nothing beyond their own kind, and that everything refers the qualities of all other things to its own proper qualities, which we may indeed extend or contract, but that's all; for beyond that relation and principle, our imagination cannot go, can guess at nothing else, nor possibly go out thence or stretch beyond it. From which spring these ancient conclusions: "Of all forms, the most beautiful is that of man; therefore God must be of that form. No one can be happy without virtue, nor virtue be without reason, and reason cannot inhabit anywhere but in a human shape: God is therefore clothed in a human shape."[3] "Ita est informatum anticipatumque mentibus nostris, ut homini, quum de Deo cogitet, forma occurrat humana."[4] Therefore it was that Xenophanes pleasantly said,[5] that if beasts frame any gods to themselves, as 'tis likely they do, they make them certainly such as themselves are, and glorify themselves therein as we do. For why may not a goose say thus: "All parts of the universe have I an interest in; the earth serves me to walk upon, the sun to light me, the stars to spread their influence upon

[1] Diogenes Laertius, Life of Plato, book iii.; Plutarch, Table Talk, viii. 1.

[2] The Magician Merlin.

[3] Cicero, De Natura Deor., 18.

[4] "It is so imprinted in our minds, and the fancy is so prepossessed with it, that when a man thinks of God, a human figure ever presents itself to the imagination."—*Idem, ibid.*, 27.

[5] Eusebius, Prep. Evangel., xiii. 13.

me; I have such an advantage by the winds, such conveniences by the waters: there is nothing that yon heavenly roof looks upon so favourably as me; I am the darling of nature. Is it not man that feeds, lodges, and serves me? 'Tis for me that he sows and grinds; if he eats me, he does the same by his fellow man, and so do I the worms that kill and devour him." As much might be said by a crane, and more magnificently, upon the account of the liberty of his flight, and the possession of that high and beautiful region: "Tam blanda conciliatrix, et tam sui est lena ipsa natura."[1]

By the same consequence, the destinies are, then, for us, for us the world; it shines, it thunders for us; creator and creatures all are for us: 'tis the mark and point to which the universality of things is directed. Look into the records that philosophy has kept, for two thousand years and more, of the affairs of heaven; the gods all that while have neither acted nor spoken but for man: she does not allow them any other consultation or vocation. See them, here, against us in war:

> "Domitosque Herculea manu
> Telluris juvenes, unde periculum
> Fulgens contremuit domus
> Saturni veteris."[2]

And here see them participate of our troubles, to make a return for having so often shared in theirs:

> "Neptunus muros, magnoque emota tridenti
> Fundamenta quatit, totamque a sedibus urbem
> Eruit: hic Juno Scæas sævissima portas
> Prima tenet."[3]

The Caunians, jealous of the authority of their own especial gods, arm themselves on the days of their devotion, and run all about their precincts cutting and slashing the air

[1] "So flattering and wheedling is nature to herself."—CICERO, *De Natura Deor.*, i. 27.

[2] "The sons of earth, subdued by the hand of Hercules, in the rude shock made old Saturn's sparkling palace shake."—HORACE, *Od.*, ii. 12, 6.

[3] "Neptune with his massive trident made the walls and foundations shake, and overturned the whole city; here cruel Juno first occupied the Scæan gates."—*Æneid*, ii. 610.

with their swords, by that means to drive away and banish all foreign gods out of their territory.[1] Their powers are limited according to our necessity; this divinity cures horses, that men, this the plague, that the scurf, that the cough; one, one sort of itch, another another: "Adeo minimis etiam rebus prava religio inserit deos."[2] This makes the grapes grow; that has presidence over lechery; this the superintendence over merchandise; for every sort of artisan a god: this has his province and credit in the east; that in the west:

"Hic illius arma . . . Hic currus fuit."[3]

"O sancte Apollo, qui umbilicum certum terrarum obtines!"[4]

"Pallada Cecropidæ, Minoia Creta Dianam,
Vulcanum tellus Hypsipylæa colit,
Junonem Sparte, Pelopeiadesque Mycenæ;
Pinigerum Fauni Mænalis ora caput;
Mars Latio venerandus erat:"[5]

this deity has only one town or one family in his possession; that lives alone; this in company either voluntary or upon necessity,

"Junctaque sunt magno templa nepotis avo."[6]

there are some so common and mean (for the number amounts to six-and-thirty thousand[7]) that they must pack five or six together to produce one ear of corn, and thence take their several names; three to a door, that of the plank, that of the hinge, and that of the threshold; four to a child, protectors of his swathing clouts, his drink, meat,

[1] Herodotus, i. 172.

[2] "At such a rate does false religion create gods for the most contemptible uses."—LIVY, xxvii. 23.

[3] "Here were her arms, here her chariot."—*Æneid*, i. 16.

[4] "O sacred Phœbus, who hast sway over the navel of the earth."—CICERO, *De Div.*, ii. 56.

[5] "The Athenians worship Pallas, the Crete of Minos, Diana; Vulcan is worshipped on the Lemnian shore; Sparta and Mycene adore Juno; the Arcadians worship Faunus; Mars in Latium was adored."—OVID, *Fast.*, iii. 81.

[6] "Temples to the grandson are joined to that of the great-grandfather."—*Idem*, *ibid.*, i. 294.

[7] Hesiod, Opera et Dies, ver. 252, says thirty thousand.

sucking; some certain, some uncertain and doubtful; some that are not yet entered paradise:

> "Quos, quoniam cœli nondum dignamur honore,
> Quas dedimus, certe terras habitare sinamus."[1]

There are amongst them physicians, poets, lawyers: some, a mean betwixt the divine and human nature, mediators betwixt God and us; adored with a certain second and diminutive sort of adoration; infinite in titles and offices; some good, others evil; some old and decrepit, some that are mortal: for Chrysippus[2] was of opinion that in the last conflagration of the world all the gods will have to die except Jupiter. Man forges a thousand pretty societies betwixt God and him: is He not his countryman?

> "Jovis incunabula Creten."[3]

This is the excuse that, upon consideration of this subject, Scævola, a high priest, and Varro, a great divine, in their time make us: "That it is necessary the people should be ignorant of many things that are true, and believe many things that are false:" "Quum veritatem, qua liberetur, inquirat: credatur ei expedire, quod fallitur."[4] Human eyes cannot perceive things but by the forms they know: and do we not remember what a leap miserable Phaeton took for attempting to govern the reins of his father's horses with a mortal hand? Our mind falls into as great a profundity, and is after the same manner bruised and shattered by its own temerity. If you ask philosophy of what matter is heaven, of what the sun, what answer will she return, but that it is of iron, or, with Anaxagoras, of stone, or some other material that she makes use of? If a man inquire of Zeno what nature is? "A fire," says he,[5] "artisan, proper for generation, proceeding regularly." Archimedes, master of that science which attributes to

[1] "Whom, since we think them not yet worthy of heaven, we permit to inhabit the earth we have given."—OVID, *Met.*, i. 194.
[2] Plutarch, On the Common Conceptions, &c.
[3] "Crete, the birthplace of Jove."—OVID, *Met.*, viii. 99.
[4] "Seeing he inquires into the truth so that he may be made free, 'tis thought fit he would be deceived."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civit. Dei*, iv. 31.
[5] Cicero, De Natura Deor., ii. 22.

itself the precedence before all others for truth and certainty: "the sun," says he, "is a god of red-hot iron." Was not this a fine imagination, extracted from the beauty and inevitable necessity of geometrical demonstrations? yet not so inĕvitable and useful, but that Socrates[1] thought it was enough to know so much of geometry only as to measure the land a man bought or sold; and that Polyænus,[2] who had been a great and famous master in it, despised it, as full of falsity and manifest vanity, after he had once tasted the delicate fruits of the effeminate garden of Epicurus. Socrates in Xenophon,[3] concerning this proposition of Anaxagoras, reputed by antiquity learned above all others in celestial and divine matters, says that he had cracked his brain, as all men do who too immoderately search into knowledges which nothing appertain unto them: when he made the sun to be a burning stone, he did not consider that a stone does not shine in the fire; and which is worse, that it will there consume; and in making the sun and fire one, that fire does not turn complexions black in shining upon them; that we are able to look fixedly upon fire: and that fire kills herbs and plants. 'Tis Socrates' opinion, and mine too, that it is best judged of heaven not to judge of it at all. Plato having occasion in his "Timæus" to speak of dæmons: "This undertaking," says he, "exceeds our ability; we are to believe those ancients who said they were begotten by them: 'tis against reason to refuse faith to the children of the gods, though what they say should not be proved by any necessary or probable reasons, seeing they engage to speak of domestic and quite familiar things."

Let us see if we have a little more light in the knowledge of human and natural things. Is it not a ridiculous attempt for us to devise for those, to whom by our own confession our knowledge is not able to attain, another body, and to lend a false form of our own invention; as is manifest in the motion of the planets, to which, seeing our wits cannot possibly arrive nor conceive their natural conduct, we lend them material, heavy, and substantial springs of our own, by which to move:

[1] Xenophon, Mem of Socrates, iv. 7, 2.
[2] Cicero, Acad., ii. 38.
[3] *Ubi supra.*

"Temo aureus, aurea summæ
Curvatura rotæ, radiorum argenteus ordo:"[1]

you would say that we had had coach-makers, wheel-wrights, and painters that went up on high to make engines of various movements, and to range the wheels and interlacings of the heavenly bodies of differing colours about the axis of Necessity, according to Plato:[2]

"Mundus domus est maxima rerum,
Quam quinque altitonæ fragmine zonæ
Cingunt, per quam limbus pictus bis sex signis
Stelliimicantibus, altus in obliquo æthere, lunæ
Bigas acceptat:"[3]

these are all dreams and fantastic follies. Why will not Nature please, once for all, to lay open her bosom to us, and plainly discover to us the means and conduct of her movements, and prepare our eyes to see them? Good God, what blunders, what mistakes should we discover in our poor science! I am mistaken if it apprehend any one thing as it really is: and I shall depart hence more ignorant of all other things than of my own ignorance.

Have *I* not read in Plato this divine saying, that "Nature is nothing but an enigmatic poesy?"[4] as if a man might, peradventure, say, a veiled and shaded picture, breaking out here and there with an infinite variety of false lights

[1] "A golden beam, wheels of gold, and silver spokes."—OVID, *Met.*, ii. 107.

[2] Republic, x. 12.

[3] "The world is the great home of all things, which five thundering zones enfold, through which a girdle, painted with twelve sparkling constellations, shines high in the oblique roof, marks the diurnal course, and receives the two-horsed chariot of the moon."—VARRO, in *Catal.*

[4] "Montaigne has here mistaken Plato's sense, whose words, in Alcibiades, ii. p. 42, C., are these: *Ἐστι τε φυσει ποιητικὴ ἡ συμπᾶσα αἰνιγματώδης*—'All poetry is in its nature enigmatical.' Plato says this by reason of a verse in Homer's Margites, which he explains, and which, indeed, has something in it that is enigmatical. Either Montaigne did not see this passage in Plato, or else he read it without closely examining it. Nature is certainly a riddle with respect to us; but it does not appear very plain in what sense it may be called enigmatical poetry. Montaigne himself, to whom this term appears so divine, does not explain it to us very clearly."—COSTE.

to puzzle our conjectures. "Latent ista omnia crassis occultata et circumfusa tenebris; ut nulla acies humani ingenii tanta sit, quæ penetrare in cœlum, terram intrare possit."[1] And certainly philosophy is no other than a sophisticated poesy. Whence do the ancient writers extract their authorities but from the poets? and the first of them were poets themselves, and wrote accordingly. Plato himself is but a disconnected poet: Timon injuriously calls him the great forger of miracles.[2] All superhuman sciences make use of the poetic style. Just as women for themselves make use of teeth of ivory where the natural are wanting, and instead of their true complexion make one of some foreign matter; legs of cloth or felt, and plumpness of cotton, and in the sight and knowledge of every one paint, patch, and trick up themselves with false and borrowed beauty: so does science (and even our law itself has, they say, legal fictions whereon it builds the truth of its justice); she gives us, in presupposition and for current pay, things which she herself informs us were invented: for these epicycles, excentric and concentric, which astrology makes use of to carry on the motions of the stars, she gives us as the best she could contrive upon that subject; as also, in all the rest, philosophy presents us, not that which really is or what she really believes, but what she has contrived with the most plausible likelihood and the fairest aspect. Plato[3] upon the subject of the state of human bodies and those of beasts: "I should know that what I have said is truth," says he, "had I the confirmation of an oracle: but this I will affirm, that what I have said is the most likely to be true of anything I could say."

'Tis not to heaven only that she sends her ropes, engines, and wheels; let us consider a little what she says of ourselves and of our contexture: there is not more retrogradation, trepidation, accession, recession, aberration, in the stars and celestial bodies than they have found out in this poor little human body. Truly they have good reason

[1] "All those things lie concealed and involved in so caliginous an obscurity, that no point of human wit can be so sharp as to pierce heaven, or penetrate the earth."—CICERO, *Acad.*, ii. 39.

[2] Or, rather, of platitudes. Diogenes Laertius, Life of Plato, 22.

[3] In the Timæus.

upon that very account to call it the Little World,[1] so many tools and parts have they employed to erect and build it. To accommodate the motions they see in man, the various functions and faculties that we find in ourselves, into how many parts have they divided the soul? in how many places lodged, into how many orders have they divided, to how many stories have they raised this poor creature man, besides those that are natural and to be perceived? and how many offices and vocations have they assigned him? They make of him an imaginary public thing; 'tis a subject that they hold and handle; and they have full power granted to them to rip, place, displace, piece, and stuff it, every one according to his own fancy, and yet to this day they possess it not. They cannot, not in reality only but even in dreams, so govern it that there will not be some cadence or sound that will escape their architecture, enormous as it is, and botched with a thousand false and fantastic patches. And it is not reason to excuse them; for though we are content with painters when they paint heaven, earth, seas, mountains, remote islands, if they gave us but some slight mark of them, and, as of things unknown, are satisfied with a feigned and obscure shadowing forth; yet when they come to draw us by the life, or any other subject which is known and familiar to us, we then require of them a perfect and exact representation of lineaments and colours, and despise them if they fail in it.

I am very well pleased with the Milesian girl who, observing the philosopher Thales to be always contemplating the celestial arch and with eyes ever gazing upward, laid something in his way that he might stumble at, to put him in mind that it would be time to take up his thoughts about things in the clouds when he had provided for those under his feet. Certes, she advised him very well, rather to look to himself than to gaze at heaven;[2] for, as Demo-

[1] Microcosmos.

[2] "She was maid-servant to Thales according to Plato, from whom this story is taken; but he does not say that he stumbled at anything laid in his way by his servant, but that, as he was walking along, with his eyes lifted up to the stars, he fell into a well."—COSTE.

critus says, by the mouth of Cicero, "Quod est ante pedes nemo spectat: cœli scrutantur plagas."[1] But our condition will have it so that the knowledge of what we have in hand is as remote from us, and as much above the clouds as that of the stars: as Socrates says in Plato, that whoever tampers with philosophy may be reproached as Thales was by the woman, that he sees nothing of that which is before him; for every philosopher is ignorant of what his neighbour does; yes, and of what he does himself, and is ignorant of what they both are, whether beasts or men.

And these people who find Sebonde's arguments too weak, who are ignorant of nothing, who govern the world, and who know all things,

> "Quæ mare compescant causæ; quid temperet annum,
> Stellæ sponte sua, jussæve, vagentur et errent;
> Quid premat obscurum lunæ, quid proferat orbem,
> Quid velit et possit rerum concordia discors;"[2]

have they not sometimes in their books sounded the difficulties they have met with of knowing their own being? We see very well that the finger moves, that the foot moves, that some parts have motion of themselves without our leave, and that others work by our direction; that one sort of apprehension occasions blushing, another paleness; such an imagination works upon the spleen only, another upon the brain; one occasions laughter, another tears; another stupefies and astounds all our senses and arrests the movements of our members; at one object the stomach will rise, at another a member that lies somewhat lower: but how a spiritual impression should make such a breach into a massive and solid subject, and the nature of the connection and contexture of these admirable springs and movements, never man yet knew: "Omnia incerta ratione, et in naturæ majes-

[1] "No man regards what is under his feet; they are always prying towards heaven."—CICERO, *De Divin.*, ii. 13. It is not a saying of Democritus, but a line of poetry directed by Cicero against Democritus.

[2] "What governs the sea, what rules the year, whether the planets move spontaneously or under compulsion, what obscures the moon, what the concording discord of all things will or can effect."—HORACE, *Epist.*, i. 12, 16.

tate, abdita,"[1] says Pliny; and St. Augustin: "modus, quo corporibus adhærent spiritus . . . omnino mirus est, nec comprehendi ab homine potest; et hoc ipse homo est;"[2] and yet it is not so much as doubted; for the opinions of men are received according to ancient beliefs, by authority and upon trust, as if it were religion and law: that which is commonly held about it is an accepted jargon; this assumed truth, with all its clutter of arguments and proofs, is admitted as a firm and solid body that is no more to be shaken, no further to be judged of; on the contrary, every one, as best he may, corroborates and fortifies this received belief with the utmost power of his reason, which is a supple utensil, pliable and to be accommodated to any figure: and thus the world comes to be filled with lies and fopperies. The reason that men do not doubt of so few things is that they never examine common impressions; they do not dig to the root where the faults and weakness lie; they only debate about the branches: they do not ask whether such and such a thing be true, but if it has been so and so understood; it is not inquired whether Galen said anything to purpose, but whether he said this or that. In truth there was very good reason that this curb and constraint on the liberty of our judgments and this tyranny over our beliefs, should be extended to the schools and arts; the god of scholastic knowledge is Aristotle; 'tis irreligion to question any of his decrees, as it was those of Lycurgus at Sparta; his doctrine is magisterial law, which, peradventure, is as false as another. I do not know why I should not as willingly accept either the ideas of Plato, or the atoms of Epicurus, or the *plenum* and *vacuum* of Leucippus and Democritus, or the water of Thales, or the infinity of nature of Anaximander,[3] or the air of Diogenes, or the numbers and symmetry of Pythagoras, or the infinity of Parmenides, or the One of Musæus, or the water and fire of Apollodorus, or the similar parts of Anaxagoras, or the discord and

[1] "All things are uncertain to reason, and concealed in the majesty of nature."—PLINY, ii. 37.

[2] "The manner whereby souls adhere to bodies is altogether marvellous, and cannot be conceived by man, and yet this union is man."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civit. Dei*, xxi. 10.

[3] Sextus Empiricus, Pyrr., iii. 4.

friendship of Empedocles, or the fire of Heraclitus, or any other opinion of that infinite confusion of opinions and determinations which this fine human reason produces by its certitude and clear-sightedness in everything it meddles withal, as I should the opinion of Aristotle upon this subject of the principles of natural things; which principles he builds of three pieces, matter, form, and privation. And what can be more vain than to make inanity itself the cause of the production of things? privation is a negative: by what fancy could he make them the cause and original of things that are? And yet all this was not to be controverted, but as an exercise of logic; nothing was to be discussed to bring it into doubt, but only to defend the author of the school from foreign objections: his authority is the *non ultra*, beyond which it was not permitted to inquire.

It is very easy upon granted foundations to build whatever we please: for according to the law and ordering of this beginning, the other parts of the structure are easily carried on without any mishap. By this way, we find our reason well-grounded and discourse at a venture; for our masters prepossess and gain beforehand as much room in our belief as is necessary for them towards concluding afterwards what they please, as geometricians do by their postulates; the consent and approbation we allow them, giving them power to draw us to the right and left, and to whirl us about at their own pleasure. Whoever is believed upon his presuppositions is our master and our god: he will take the level of his foundations so ample and so easy that by them he may mount us up to the clouds, if he so please. In this practice and communication of science we have taken the saying of Pythagoras, "that every expert ought to be believed in his own art," for current pay; the dialectician refers the signification of words to the grammarian; the rhetorician borrows the state of arguments from the dialectician; the poet his measures from the musician; the geometrician his proportions from the arithmetician; the metaphysicians take physical conjectures as their foundations; for every science has its principles presupposed, by which human judgment is everywhere limited. If you drive against the barrier where the prin-

cipal error lies, they have presently this sentence in their mouths; "that there is no disputing with persons who deny principles;" now men can have no principles, if not revealed to them by the Divinity; of all the rest, the beginning, the middle, and the end are nothing but dream and vapour. To those who contend upon presupposition, we must, on the contrary, presuppose to them the same axiom upon which the dispute is: for every human presupposition, and every declaration has as much authority one as another, if reason do not make the difference. Wherefore they are all to be put into the balance, and first the general and those that tyrannise over us. The persuasion of certainty is a certain testimony of folly and extreme uncertainty; and there are not a more foolish sort of men, nor that are less philosophers, than the Philodoxes of Plato:[1] we must inquire whether fire be hot, whether snow be white, if we know of any such things as hard or soft.

And as to those answers of which they made old stories; as to him who doubted if there were any such thing as heat, whom they bid throw himself into the fire; and to him who denied the coldness of ice, whom they bad to put a cake of ice into his bosom; these are pitiful things, altogether unworthy of the profession of philosophy. If they had let us alone in our natural state, to receive the appearance of things without us according as they present themselves to us by our senses, and had permitted us to follow our own natural appetites, simple and regulated by the condition of our birth, they might have had reason to talk at that rate; but 'tis from them that we have learned to make ourselves judges of the world; tis from them that we derive this fancy, "that human reason is controller-general of all that is without and within the roof of heaven, that comprehends everything, that can do everything, by the means of which everything is known and understood." This answer would be good amongst cannibals, who enjoy the happiness of a long, quiet, and peaceable life without Aristotle's precepts, and without the knowledge of the name of physics; this answer would,

[1] "'Persons who are possessed of opinions of which they know not the grounds, whose heads are intoxicated with words, who see and affect only the appearances of things.' This is taken from Plato, who has characterised them very particularly at the end of the fifth book of his Republic."—COSTE.

peradventure, be of more value and greater force than all those they borrow from their reason and invention; of this all animals would be capable with us, and all things where the power of the law of nature is yet pure and simple; but this they have renounced. They must not tell us, "it is true, for you see and feel it to be so:" they must tell me whether I really feel what I think I feel; and if I do feel it, they must then tell me why I feel it, and how, and what; let them tell me the name, origin, parts and junctures of heat and cold; the qualities of agent and patient; or let them give up their profession, which is not to admit or approve of anything but by the way of reason; that is their test in all sorts of essays: but certainly, 'tis a test full of falsity, error, weakness, and defect.

How can we better prove this than by itself? if we are not to believe her, when speaking of herself, she can hardly be thought fit to judge of foreign things: if she know anything, it must at least be her own being and abode; she is in the soul, and either a part or an effect of it; for true and essential reason, from which we by a false colour borrow the name, is lodged in the bosom of the Almighty; there is her habitation and retreat, 'tis thence she imparts her rays, when God is pleased to impart any beam of it to mankind, as Pallas issued from her father's head to communicate herself to the world.

Now let us see what human reason tells us of herself, and of the soul: not of the soul in general, of which almost all philosophy makes the celestial and first bodies participants, nor of that which Thales[1] attributed even to things reputed inanimate, drawn on so to do by the consideration of the loadstone; but of that which appertains to us, and that we ought the best to know:

> "Ignoratur enim, quæ sit natura animai;
> Nata sit; an, contra, nascentibus insinuetur;
> Et simul intereat nobiscum morte dirempta,
> An tenebris Orci visat, vastasque lacunas,
> An pecudes alias divinitus insinuet se."[2]

[1] Diogenes Laertius, i. 24.

[2] "None know the nature of the soul, whether it be born with us, or be infused into us at our birth; whether it dies with us, or descends to the shades below, or whether the gods transmit it into other animals."—LUCRETIUS, i. 113.

Crates and Dicæarchus[1] were taught by it,[2] that there was no soul at all; but that the body stirs by a natural motion: Plato,[3] that it was a substance moving of itself; Thales, a nature without repose;[4] Asclepiades, an exercising of the senses; Hesiod and Anaximander, a thing composed of earth and water; Parmenides, of earth and fire; Empedocles, of blood:[5]

"Sanguineam vomit ille animam;"[6]

Posidonius, Cleanthes, and Galien, that it was heat or a hot complexion:

"Igneus est ollis vigor, et cœlestis origo;"[7]

Hippocrates, a spirit diffused all over the body; Varro, that it was an air received at the mouth, heated in the lungs, moistened in the heart, and diffused throughout the whole body. Zeno, the quintessence of the four elements;[8] Heraclides Ponticus, that it was the light; Xenocrates and the Egyptians, a moveable number; the Chaldæans, a virtue without any determinate form:

"Habitum quemdam vitalem corporis esse,
Harmoniam Græci quam dicunt:"[9]

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[1] "Apud Sext. Empir. Pyrrh. Hypot., lib. ii. cap. 5, p. 57, et adv. Mathem., *περὶ ἀνθρώπου*, p. 201. 'Dicæarchus Phærecratem quemdam Phthiotam senem—disserentem inducit nihil esse omnino animum,'" &c.—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, lib. i. c. 10.

[2] *i.e.*, Human reason.

[3] De Legibus, x.

[4] According to Plutarch, De Placitis Philosophorum, lib. iv. cap. 2, which moves of itself, *αὐτοκίνητον*.

[5] "Empedocles animum esse censet, cordi suffusum sanguine."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, lib. i. cap. 6.

[6] "He vomits up his bloody soul."—VIRGIL, *Æneid*, ix. 349.

[7] "Their vigour is of fire, and descended from the gods."—*Idem, ibid.*, vi. 730.

[8] "I know not where Montaigne had this; for Cicero expressly says that this quintessence, or fifth nature, is a thought of Aristotle, who makes the soul to be composed of it; and that Zeno thought the soul to be fire.—Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., lib. i. cap. 9 and 10. After this, Cicero adds, 'That Aristotle calls the mind, which he derives from the fifth nature, Entelechia, a new-coined word, signifying a perpetual motion.'"—COSTE.

[9] "A certain vital habit which the Greeks call a harmony."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 100.

let us not forget Aristotle, who held the soul to be that which naturally causes the body to move, which he calls Entelechia, with as cold an invention as any of the rest; for he neither speaks of the essence, nor of the original, nor of the nature of the soul, but only takes notice of the effect; Lactantius, Seneca, and most of the dogmatists, have confessed that it was a thing they did not understand: and after all this enumeration of opinions, "harum sententiarum quæ vera sit, Deus aliquis viderit:" says Cicero;[1] I know, by myself, says St. Bernard,[2] how incomprehensible God is, seeing I cannot comprehend the parts of my own being. Heraclitus,[3] who was of opinion that every place was full of souls and demons, nevertheless maintained that no one could advance so far towards the knowledge of the soul, as ever to arrive at it; so profound was its essence.

Neither is there less controversy and debate about seating it. Hippocrates and Hierophilus place it in the ventricle of the brain;[4] Democritus and Aristotle throughout the whole body:[5]

> "Ut bona sæpe valetudo quum dicitur esse
> Corporis, et non est tamen hæc pars ulla valentis;"[6]

Epicurus, in the stomach:

> "Hic exsultat enim pavor ac metus; hæc loca circum
> Lætitiæ mulcent;"[7]

the Stoics, about and within the heart; Erasistratus, adjoining the membrane of the epicranion; Empedocles, in the blood, as also Moses,[8] which was the reason why he interdicted eating the blood of beasts because the soul is there seated: Galien thought, that every part of the body had its soul: Strato[9] placed it betwixt the eyebrows: "Qua

[1] "Of these opinions, which is the true, let some God determine."—*Tusc.*, i. 11.
[2] De Anima, c. 1. [3] Diogenes Laertius, in vita.
[4] Plutarch, De Placitis Philosophorum, lib. iv. cap. 5.
[5] Sextus Empiricus adv. Mathem, p. 201.
[6] "As when good health is often said to be a part of the body, whereas of a healthy man 'tis no part."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 103.
[7] "This is the seat of terror and fear; here is the place where joys exist."—*Idem, ibid.*, 142.
[8] Genesis iv. Leviticus, vii. 26. [9] De Placitis Philos., iv. 5.

facie quidem sit animus, aut ubi habitet, ne quærendum quidem est:"[1] says Cicero. I very willingly deliver this author to you in his own words: for why spoil the language of eloquence? besides that it were no great prize to steal the matter of his inventions; they are neither very frequent, nor of any great weight, and sufficiently known. But the reason why Chrysippus argues it to be about the heart, as all the rest of that sect do, is not to be omitted. "It is," says he,[2] "because when we would affirm anything, we lay our hand upon our breasts: and when we will pronounce ἐγὼ, which signifies *I*, we let the lower mandible sink towards the stomach." This place ought not to be over-slipt without a remark upon the futility of so great a man; for besides that these considerations are infinitely light in themselves, the last is only a proof to the Greeks that they have their souls lodged in that part: no human judgment is so vigilant that it does not sometime sleep. Why should we be afraid to speak? We see the Stoics,[3] fathers of human prudence, have found out that the soul of a man crushed under a ruin, long labours and strives to get out, like a mouse caught in a trap, before it can disengage itself from the burden. Some hold that the world was made to give bodies, by way of punishment, to the spirits, fallen by their own fault, from the purity wherein they had been created, the first creation having been no other than incorporeal; and that according as they are more or less remote from their spirituality, so are they more or less lightly or heavily incorporated, and that thence proceeds the variety of so much created matter. But the spirit that, for his punishment, was invested with the body of the sun, must certainly have a very rare and particular measure of thirst.

The extremities of our perquisition all fall into and terminate in a misty astonishment, as Plutarch says,[4] of the testimony of histories, that as in charts and maps the utmost bounds of known countries are filled up with marshes, impenetrable forests, deserts, and uninhabitable

[1] "What figure the soul is of, or what part it inhabits, is not to be inquired into."—CICERO, *Tuscul.*, i. 28.

[2] Galien, De Placitis Hippocrates et Platonis, ii. 2.

[3] Seneca, Ep. 57.

[4] Life of Theseus.

places; and this is the reason why the most gross and childish ravings are most found in those authors who treat of the most elevated subjects, and proceed the furthest in them, losing themselves in their own curiosity and presumption. The beginning and the end of knowledge are equally foolish: observe to what a pitch Plato flies in his poetic clouds; do but take notice there of the gibberish of the gods; but what did he dream of when he defined man to be a two-legged animal, without feathers:[1] giving those who had a mind to deride him, a pleasant occasion; for, having pulled off the feathers of a live capon, they went about calling it the Man of Plato.

And what of the Epicureans? out of what simplicity did they first imagine that their atoms, which they said were bodies having some weight and a natural motion downward, had made the world: till they were put in mind by their adversaries that, according to this description, it was impossible they should unite and join to one another, their fall being so direct and perpendicular, and producing parallel lines throughout? wherefore they were fain thereafter to add a fortuitous and lateral motion, and, moreover, to furnish their atoms with hooked tails, by which they might unite and cling to one another; and even then do not those who attack them upon this second invention, put them hardly to it? "If the atoms have by chance formed so many sorts of figures, why did it never fall out that they made a house or a shoe? why, at the same rate, should we not believe that an infinite number of Greek letters, strown all over a place, might fall into the contexture of the Iliad?"[2]

"Whatever is capable of reason," says Zeno,[3] "is better than that which is not capable: there is nothing better than the world: the world is therefore capable of reason." Cotta,[4] by this same argumentation, makes the world a mathematician; and 'tis also made a musician and an organist by this other argumentation of Zeno: "the whole is more than a part; we are capable of wisdom, and are

[1] Diogenes Laertius, in vita, 40.
[2] Cicero, De Nat. Deor., ii. 57.
[3] Idem, ibid., 37.
[4] Idem, ibid., iii. 9.

part of the world: therefore the world is wise." There are infinite like examples, not merely of arguments that are false in themselves, but silly: that do not hold together, and that accuse their authors not so much of ignorance as of imprudence, in the reproaches the philosophers throw in one another's teeth upon the dissensions in their opinions and sects.

Whoever should bundle up a lusty faggot of the fooleries of human wisdom, would produce wonders. I willingly muster up these few as patterns in their way not less profitable than more moderate instructions. Let us judge by these what opinion we are to have of man, of his sense and reason, when in these great persons, who have raised human knowledge so high, so many gross and manifest errors and defects are to be found!

For my part, I would rather believe that they have treated of knowledge casually, and as a toy with both hands, and have contended about reason as of a vain and frivolous instrument, setting on foot all sorts of inventions and fancies, sometimes more sinewy, and sometimes weaker. This same Plato, who defines man as if he were a fowl, says elsewhere,[1] after Socrates, "that he does not, in truth, know what man is, and that he is a member of the world the hardest to understand." But this variety and instability of opinions, they tacitly lead us as it were by the hand to this resolution of their irresolution. They profess not always to deliver their opinions barefaced and apparent; they have one while disguised them in the fabulous shadows of poesy, and another while under some other mask: our imperfection carries this also along with it, that raw meat is not always proper for our stomachs; we must dry, alter, and mix it. These men do the same; they often conceal their real opinions and judgments, and falsify them to accommodate themselves to the public use. They will not make an open profession of ignorance and of the imbecility of human reason, that they may not frighten children; but they sufficiently discover it to us under the appearance of a troubled and inconstant science.

I advised a person in Italy, who had a great mind to

[1] In the first Alcibiades.

speak Italian, that provided he only had a desire to make himself understood, without being ambitious otherwise to excel, that he should simply make use of the first words that came to the tongue's end, Latin, French, Spanish, or Gascon, and then by adding the Italian termination, he could not fail of hitting upon some idiom of the country, either Tuscan, Roman, Venetian, Piedmontese, or Neapolitan, and to apply himself to some one of those many forms: I say the same of philosophy; she has so many faces, so much variety, and has said so many things, that all our dreams and fantasies are there to be found; human imagination can conceive nothing, good or bad, that is not there; "Nihil tam absurdè dici potest, quod non dicatur ab aliquo philosophorum."[1] And I am the more willing to expose my own whimsies to the public, forasmuch as though they are spun out of myself and without any pattern, I know they will be found related to some ancient humour, and there will be no want of some one to say, "That's whence he took it." My manners are natural; I have not called in the assistance of any discipline to frame them: but weak as they are, when it came into my head to lay them open to the world's view, and that, to expose them to the light in a little more decent garb, I went about to help them with reasons and examples: it was a wonder to myself incidentally to find them comformable to so many philosophical discourses and examples. I never knew what regimen my life was of till after it was near worn out and spent: a new figure, an unpremeditate and accidental philosopher.

But to return to our soul: that Plato[2] has placed reason in the brain, anger in the heart, and concupiscence in the liver, 'tis likely that it was rather an interpretation of the movements of the soul than that he intended a division and separation of it, as of a body, into several members. And the most likely of their opinions is, that 'tis always a soul, that, by its faculty, reasons, remembers, comprehends, judges, desires and exercises all its other operations by

[1] "Nothing can be so absurdly said, that has not been said before by some of the philosophers."—CICERO, *De Divin.*, ii. 58.

[2] Second part of the Timæus; and see Diogenes Laertius, Life of Plato.

divers instruments of the body; as the pilot guides his ship according to his experience of it: now tightening, now slacking, the cordage, one while hoisting the mainyard or moving the rudder, by one and the same power carrying on so many several effects: and that it is lodged in the brain, which appears from this that the wounds and accidents which touch that part immediately offend the faculties of the soul; and 'tis not incongruous that it should thence diffuse itself into the other parts of the body:

"Medium non deserit unquam
Cœli Phœbus iter; radiis tamen omnia lustrat;"[1]

as the sun sheds from heaven its light and influence, and fills the world with them:

"Cætera pars animæ, per totum dissita corpus,
Paret, et ad numen mentis nomenque movetur."[2]

Some have said, that there was a general soul, as it were a great body, from which all the particular souls were extracted, and thither again returned, always restoring themselves to that universal matter:

"Deum namque ire per omnes
Terrasque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum:
Hinc pecudes, armenta, viros, genus omne ferarum,
Quemque sibi tenues nascentem arcessere vitas:
Scilicet huc reddi deinde, ac resoluta referri
Omnia: nec morti esse locum:"[3]

others, that they only rejoined and reunited themselves to it; others, that they were produced from the divine substance; others, by the angels, of fire and air; others, that they were from all antiquity; some, that they were created at the very point of time the bodies wanted them; others made them descend from the orb of the moon, and return

[1] "Phœbus never deviates from his central way, yet enlightens all things with his rays."—CLAUDIUS, *De Sexto Consul. Hon.*, v. 411.

[2] "The other part of the soul, diffused all over the body, obeys the divinity and great name of the mind."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 144.

[3] "They believe that God circulates through all the earth, sea, and high heavens; thence animals, men, all the kinds of wild animals, draw the breath of life, and thither return when the body is dissolved: there is no place for death."—VIRGIL, *Geor.*, iv. 221.

thither; the generality of the ancients, that they were begotten from father to son, after a like manner and production with all other natural things; raising their argument from the likeness of children to their fathers:

> "Instillata patris virtus tibi;
> Fortes creantur fortibus, et bonis;"[1]

and that we see descend from fathers to their children, not only bodily marks, but moreover a resemblance of humours, complexions, and inclinations of the soul:

> "Denique cur acris violentia triste leonum
> Seminium sequitur? vulpes dolus, et fuga cervos
> A patribus datur, et patrius pavor incitat artus?
> . . . . . .
> Si non, certa suo quia semine seminioque
> Vis animi pariter crescit cum corpore toto?"[2]

that thereupon the divine justice is grounded, punishing in the children the faults of their fathers; forasmuch as the contagion of paternal vices is in some sort imprinted in the soul of children, and that the disorders of their will extend to them:[3] moreover, that if souls had any other derivation than a natural consequence and that they had been some other thing out of the body, they would retain some memory of their first being, the natural faculties that are proper to them of discoursing, reasoning, and remembering, being considered:

> "Si in corpus nascentibus insinuatur,
> Cur super anteactam ætatem meminisse nequimus;
> Nec vestigia gestarum rerum ulla tenemus?"[4]

for to make the condition of our souls such as we would

[1] "The virtues of the father have been infused into thee. The brave spring from the brave, the good from the good."—HOR., *Od.*, iv. 4, 29.

[2] "For why should ferocity ever spring from the fierce lion's seed? why craft from the fox? why fear from the stag? Why should his readiness to fly descend to him from his father? . . . but that the soul has germs like the body, and still increases as the body increases."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 741, 746.

[3] Plutarch, Why the Divine Justice, &c.

[4] "If it be infused in our bodies at our birth, why do we retain no memory of our preceding life, and why not remember anything we did before."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 671.

have it to be, we must presuppose them all-knowing, when in their natural simplicity and purity; and, this being so, they had been such, while free from the prison of the body, as well before they entered into it, as we hope they shall be after they are gone out of it: and this former knowledge, it should follow, they should remember being yet in the body, as Plato said,[1] "That what we learn is no other than a remembrance of what we knew before;" a thing which every one by experience may maintain to be false; forasmuch, in the first place, as we remember what we have been taught: and as, if the memory purely performed its office, it would at least suggest to us something more than what we have been taught; secondly, that which she knew, being in her purity, was a true knowledge, knowing things, as they are, by her divine intelligence: whereas here we make her receive falsehood and vice, when we tell her of these, and herein she cannot employ her reminiscence, that image and conception having never been planted in her. To say that the corporeal presence so suffocates her natural faculties that they are there utterly extinguished, is, first, contrary to this other belief of acknowledging her power to be so great, and those operations of it that men sensibly perceive in this life to be so admirable, as to have thereby concluded this divinity and past eternity, and the immortality to come:

> "Nam si tantopere est animi mutata potestas,
> Omnis ut actarum exciderit retinentia rerum,
> Non, ut opinor, ea ab letho jam longior errat."[2]

Furthermore, 'tis here with us, and not elsewhere, that the powers and effects of the soul ought to be considered: all the rest of her perfections are vain and useless to her; 'tis by her present condition that all her immortality is to be rewarded and paid, and of the life of man only that she is to render an account. It had been injustice to have stripped her of her means of power; to have disarmed her, in order in the time of her captivity and imprisonment, of her weak-

[1] In the Phædo.

[2] "For if the mind be changed to that degree that it has lost all memory of past things, this, I confess, appears to me not much different from death."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 674.

ness and infirmity, in the time wherein she is under force and constraint, to pass my sentence and condemnation of infinite and perpetual duration; and insist, upon the consideration of so short a time, peradventure a life of but an hour or two, or at the most but of a century, which have no more proportion to infinity than an instant: from this momentary interval, to ordain and definitively determine her whole being: it were an unreasonable disproportion to acquire an eternal recompense in return for so short a life. Plato,[1] to save himself from this inconvenience, will have future rewards limited to the term of a hundred years, relatively to human duration; and among ourselves several have given them temporal limits: by this they judged that the generation of the soul followed the common condition of human things, as also her life, according to the opinion of Epicurus and Democritus, which has been the most received, pursuant to these fine notions: that we see it born as soon as the body is capable of it; that we see it increase in vigour as the corporeal vigour increases; that its feebleness in infancy is very manifest, then its better form and maturity, and finally, its declension in old age, and its decrepitude:

"Gigni pariter cum corpore, et una
Crescere sentimus, pariterque senescere mentem:"[2]

they perceived it to be capable of divers passions, and agitated with several painful motions, whence it fell into lassitude and uneasiness; capable of alteration and change, of cheerfulness, of dulness, of faintness; subject to diseases and injuries of its own, as the stomach or the foot:

"Mentem sanari, corpus ut ægrum,
Cernimus, et flecti medicina posse videmus:"[3]

dazzled and intoxicated with the fumes of wine; jostled from her seat by the vapours of a burning fever; laid asleep

[1] Republic, x.

[2] "We see that souls are born with the bodies, with them increase, with them decay."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 446.

[3] "We see sick minds cured as well as sick bodies by the help of medicines."—*Idem, ibid.*, 509.

by the application of some medicaments, and roused by others:

"Corpoream naturam animi esse necesse est,
Corporeis quoniam telis ictuque laborat:"[1]

they saw it astounded and all its faculties overthrown by the mere bite of a mad dog, and, in that condition, to have no such stability of reason, no such sufficiency, no such virtue, no philosophical resolution, no such resistance as could exempt it from the subjection of these accidents; the slaver of a contemptible cur, shed upon the hand of Socrates, to shake all his wisdom and all his so great and well regulated imaginations, and so to annihilate them as that there remained no trace or footstep of his former knowledge:

"Vis . . . animai
Conturbatur, et . . . divisa seorsum
Disjectatur, eodem illo distracta veneno:"[2]

and this poison to find no more resistance in this great soul, than in that of an infant of four years old; a poison sufficient to make all philosophy, if it were incarnate, furious and mad; insomuch that Cato, so stiff-necked against death and fortune, could not endure the sight of a looking-glass or of water, confounded with horror and affright at the danger of falling, by the contagion of a mad dog, into the disease called by physicians hydrophobia:

"Vis morbi distracta per artus
Turbat agens animam, spumantes æquore salso
Ventorum ut validis fervescunt viribus undæ."[3]

Now, as to this particular, philosophy has sufficiently armed man to encounter all other accidents, either with patience, or if the search of that costs too dear, by an infallible defeat, in totally depriving himself of all sentiment: but these are expedients that are only of use to a soul being itself and in its full power, capable of reason and delibera-

[1] "The soul must, of necessity, be corporeal, for we see it suffer from wounds and blows."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 509.

[2] "The power of the soul is disturbed, overthrown, and dispersed abroad by the same poison."—*Idem, ibid.*, 491.

[3] "The violence of the disease diffused throughout the limbs, disturbs the soul, as at sea the foaming waves swell and boil, stirred by the strong winds."—*Idem, ibid.*

tion: but not at all proper for this inconvenience, where, even in a philosopher, the soul becomes the soul of a madman, troubled, overturned, and lost: which many occasions may produce, as a too vehement agitation that any violent passion of the soul may beget in itself, or a wound in a certain part of the person, or vapours from the stomach, any of which may stupefy the understanding and turn the brain.

"Morbis in corporis avius errat
Sæpe animus; dementit enim, deliraque fatur;
Interdumque gravi lethargo fertur in altum
Æternumque soporem, oculis nutuque cadenti."[1]

The philosophers, methinks, have scarcely touched this string, no more than another of the same importance; they have this dilemma continually in their mouths to console our mortal condition: "The soul is either mortal or immortal; if mortal, it will suffer no pain; if immortal, it will change for the better." They never touch the other branch: "What if she change for the worse," and leave to the poets the menaces of future torments; but thereby they make for themselves a good game. These are two omissions that I often meet with in their discourses: I return to the first.

This soul loses the use of the sovereign stoical good, so constant and so firm: our fine human wisdom must here yield and give up its arms. As to the rest, they also considered, by the vanity of human reason, that the mixture and association of two so contrary things as the mortal and the immortal, was unimaginable:

"Quippe etenim mortale æterno jungere, et una
Consentire putare, et fungi mutua posse,
Desipere est. Quid enim diversius esse putandum est,
Aut magis inter se disjunctum discrepitansque,
Quam, mortale quod est, immortali atque perenni,
Junctum, in concilio sævas tolerare procellas?"[2]

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[1] "For when the body is sick, the mind often shares in the disease; wanders, grows wild, and raves, and sometimes by a heavy lethargy is cast into a profound and everlasting sleep; the eyes close, the head sinks."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 464.

[2] "For to join the mortal and the eternal, and think they can agree and work together, is folly. For what things are more differing or more distinct betwixt themselves, and more opposed, than the mortal and the immortal and eternal, joined together in order to undergo cruel storms?"—*Idem, ibid.*, 801.

Moreover, they perceived the soul declining in death, as well as the body:

"Simul ævo fessa fatiscit:" [1]

which, according to Zeno, the image of sleep sufficiently demonstrates to us; for he looks upon it as a fainting and fall of the soul, as well as of the body; "Contrahi animum et quasi labi putat atque decidere." [2] And what they perceived in some, that the soul maintained its force and vigour to the last gasp of life, they attributed to the variety of diseases; as it is observable in men at the last extremity, that some retain one sense and some another; one the hearing, and another the smell, without any alteration; and that there is no so universal a deprivation, that some parts do not remain entire and vigorous:

"Non alio pacto, quam si, pes cum dolet ægri,
In nullo caput interea sit forte dolore." [3]

The sight of our judgment has the same relation to truth that the owl's eyes have to the splendour of the sun, says Aristotle.[4] By what can we better convict it than by so gross blindness in so apparent a light? For as to the contrary opinion of the immortality of the soul, which Cicero says was first introduced, at all events by the testimony of books, by Pherecides Syrius [5] in the time of King Tullus, though others attribute it to Thales, and others to others, 'tis the part of human science that is treated of with the most doubt and the greatest reservation. The most positive dogmatists are, on this point principally, constrained to fly to the refuge of the Academy. No one knows what Aristotle has established upon this subject, any more than all the ancients in general, who handle it with a wavering belief; "Rem gratissimam promittentium magis, quam probantium;" [6] he conceals himself in clouds of words and difficult

[1] "It yields up the body to old age."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 459.

[2] "He thinks the mind is transported, and that it slips and falls."—CICERO, *De Divin.*, ii. 58.

[3] "A sick man's foot may be in pain, yet his head be free from any malady."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 111.

[4] Metaphysics, ii. 1.

[5] Of Syros, Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., i. 16.

[6] "A thing more satisfactory in the promise, than in the proof."—SENECA, *Ep.* 102.

and unintelligible fancies, and has left to his sect as great a dispute about his judgment, as about the matter itself.

Two things rendered this opinion plausible to them: one, that without the immortality of souls there would be nothing whereon to ground the vain hopes of glory, which is a consideration of wonderful repute in the world; the other, that it is a very profitable impression, as Plato says,[1] that vices, though they escape the discovery and cognisance of human justice, are still within the reach of the divine, which will pursue them even after the death of the guilty. Man is excessively solicitous to prolong his being, and has, to the utmost of his power, provided for it; monuments are erected for the conservation of the body, and from glory to transmit the name; impatient of his fortune he has employed all his wit and opinion in the rebuilding of himself, and in the sustenance of himself by his productions. The soul, by reason of its anxiety and impotence, being unable to stand by itself, wanders up and down to seek support in consolations, hopes, and other external circumstances, to which she adheres and fixes; and how light or fantastic soever invention pronounces them to it, relies more willingly and with greater assurance upon them, than upon itself. But 'tis wonderful to observe, how short the most constant and firm maintainers of this just and clear persuasion of the immortality of the soul fall, and how weak their arguments are, when they go about to prove it by human reason: "Somnia sunt non docentis, sed optantis,"[2] says one of the ancients. By which testimony man may know, that he owes the truth he himself finds out to fortune and accident; since, even when it is fallen into his hand, he has not wherewith to hold and maintain it, and that his reason has not force to make use of it. All things produced by our own reasoning and understanding, whether true or false, are subject to incertitude and controversy. 'Twas for the chastisement of our pride, and for the instruction of our misery and incapacity, that God wrought the perplexity and confusion of the old tower of Babel. Whatever we undertake without His assistance, whatever we see without the lamp of His grace, is

[1] Laws, x. 13.

[2] "They are dreams, not of the teacher but of the wisher."—CICERO, *Acad.*, ii. 38.

but vanity and folly; we corrupt and debase by our weakness the very essence of truth, which is uniform and constant, when fortune puts it into our possession. What course soever man takes of himself, God still permits it to come to the same confusion, the image whereof He so vividly represents to us in the just chastisement wherewith He crushed Nimrod's presumption, and frustrated the vain attempt of his pyramid; "Perdam sapientiam sapientium, et prudentiam prudentium reprobabo."[1] The diversity of idioms and languages with which He disturbed this work, what are they other than this infinite and perpetual altercation and discordance of opinions and reasons, which accompany and confound the vain building of human wisdom, and to very good effect? For what would hold us if we had but the least grain of knowledge? This saint has very much obliged me: "Ipsa veritatis occultatio aut humilitatis exercitatio est, aut elationis attritio."[2] To what a pitch of presumption and insolence do we raise our blindness and folly!

But to return to my subject: it was truly very good reason that we should be beholden to God only, and to the favour of His grace, for the truth of so noble a belief, since from His sole bounty we receive the fruit of immortality, which consists in the enjoyment of eternal beatitude. Let us ingenuously confess that God alone has dictated it to us, and faith; for 'tis no lesson of nature and our own reason: and whoever will inquire into his own being and power, both within and without, otherwise than by this divine privilege: whoever shall consider man impartially and without flattery, will see nothing in him of efficacy or faculty that relishes of anything but death and earth. The more we give, and confess to owe and render to God, we do it with the greater Christianity. That which this Stoic philosopher says he holds from the fortuitous consent of the popular voice, had it not been better had he held it from God? "Cum de animorum æternitate disserimus, non leve

[1] "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."—ST. PAUL, 1 *Cor.* i. 19.

[2] "The very obscurity of the truth is either an exercise of humility or a crushing of pride."—ST. AUGUSTIN, *De Civit. Dei*, xi. 22.

momentum apud nos habet consensus hominum aut timentium inferos, aut colentium. Utor hac publica persuasione."[1]

Now, the weakness of human arguments upon this subject is particularly manifested by the fabulous circumstances they have superadded as consequences of this opinion, to find out of what condition this immortality of ours was. Let us omit the Stoics ("Usuram nobis largiuntur tanquam cornicibus: diu mansuros aiunt animos; semper, negant:"[2]) who give to souls a life after this, but finite. The most universal and received fancy, and which continues down to our times in various places, is that of which they make Pythagoras the author: not that he was the original inventor, but because it received a great deal of weight and repute by the authority of his approbation; and this is, that souls at their departure out of us do nothing but shift from one body to another, from a lion to a horse, from a horse to a king, continually travelling at this rate from habitation to habitation. And he himself said that he remembered he had been Æthalides, since that Euphorbus, and afterwards Hermotimus, and finally from Pyrrhus was passed into Pythagoras, having a memory of himself of two hundred and six years.[3] And some have added that these very souls at times remount to heaven and come down again:

> "O pater, anne aliquas ad cœlum hinc ire putándum est
> Sublimes animas, iterumque ad tarda reverti
> Corpora? quæ lucis miseris tam dira cupido."[4]

Origen makes them eternally to go and come, from a better to a worse estate. The opinion that Varro[5] makes mention of is, that after four hundred and forty years' revolution they are reunited to their first bodies; Chrysippus held that this

[1] "When we discourse of the immortality of souls, the consent of men that either fear or adore the infernal powers, is of no small moment. I make use of this public persuasion."—SENECA, *Epist.* 117.

[2] "They give us long life, as also they do to crows; they say our soul shall continue long, but that it shall continue always they deny."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, i. 31.

[3] Diogenes Laertius, in vita.

[4] "O father, is it to be believed that some sublime souls should hence mount to heaven and thence return to dull flesh."—VIRGIL, *Æneid*, vi. 719.

[5] Cited by St. Augustin, De Civit. Dei, xxii. 28.

would happen after a certain space of time unknown and unlimited. Plato,[1] who professes to have derived from Pindar and the ancient poets the belief that souls are to undergo infinite vicissitudes of mutation, for which the soul is prepared, having neither punishment nor reward in the other world, but what is temporal, as its life here is but temporal, concludes that it has a singular knowledge of the affairs of heaven, of hell, of the world, through all which it has passed, repassed, and made stay in several voyages; fit matters for her memory. Observe her progress elsewhere:[2] "he who has lived well is reunited to the star to which he is assigned: he who has lived ill removes into a woman, and, if he do not there reform, is again removed into a beast of condition suitable to his vicious manners, and will see no end of his punishments till he return to his natural constitution, and has by the force of reason purged himself from the gross, stupid, and elementary qualities he was polluted with." But I will not omit the objection the Epicureans make against this transmigration from one body to another; 'tis a pleasant one: they ask, "what expedient would be found out if the number of dying should chance to be greater than that of those who are coming into the world? for the souls turned out of their old habitation would scuffle and crowd which should first get possession of this new lodging." And they further demand, "how they should pass away their time whilst waiting till a new quarter were made ready for them: or, on the contrary, if more animals should be born than die, the bodies, they say, would be but in an ill condition whilst awaiting a soul to be infused into them; and it would fall out that some bodies would die before they had been alive.

> "Denique connubia ad veneris, partusque ferarum
> Esse animas præsto, deridiculum esse videtur;
> Et spectare immortales mortalia membra
> Innumero numero, certareque præproperanter
> Inter se, quæ prima potissimaque insinuetur."[3]

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[1] In the Menon. [2] Plato in the Timæus.

[3] "It seems ridiculous that souls should be always awaiting the coupling and birth of animals, and that immortals should in vast numbers crowd about mortal germs, and strive and contend with eagerness which should first possess them."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 777.

Others have arrested the soul in the body of the deceased, with it to animate serpents, worms, and other beasts which are said to be bred out of the corruption of our limbs, and even out of our ashes; others divide it into two parts, the one mortal, the other immortal; others make it corporeal, and nevertheless immortal; some make it immortal without science or knowledge. And some have believed that devils were made of the souls of the damned, and this has been the fancy of some among ourselves, as Plutarch thinks that gods are made of those that are saved; for there are few things which that author is so positive in as he is in this; ever maintaining, elsewhere, a doubtful and ambiguous way of expression: "We are to hold," says he,[1] "and steadfastly to believe, that the souls of virtuous men, both according to nature and to the divine justice, become saints, and from saints demi-gods, and from demi-gods, after they are perfectly, as in sacrifices of purgation, cleansed and purified, being delivered from all passibility and all mortality, they become, not by any civil decree but in real truth, and according to all probability of reason, entire and perfect gods, receiving a most happy and glorious end." But who desires to see him, he who is the most sober and moderate of the whole tribe, lay about him with greater boldness, and relate his miracles upon this subject, I refer him to his Treatise of the Moon, and his Dæmon of Socrates, where he may, as evidently as in any other place whatever, satisfy himself that the mysteries of philosophy have many strange things in common with those of poesy; the human understanding losing itself in attempting to sound and search all things to the bottom, just as we, tired and worn out with a long course of life, relapse into infancy. Such are the fine and certain instructions which we extract from human knowledge concerning the soul.

Neither is there less temerity in what it teaches us touching our corporeal parts. Let us choose out one or two examples, for otherwise we should lose ourselves in this vast and troubled ocean of medicinal errors. Let us see whether, at least, they agree about the matter whereof men produce one another; for as to their first production

[1] Life of Romulus.

it is no wonder, if in a thing so high and so long since past, human understanding finds itself perplexed and dissipated. Archelaus the naturalist, whose disciple and favourite Socrates was, according to Aristoxenus, said,[1] that both men and beasts were made of a lacteous slime, expressed by the heat of the earth: Pythagoras says,[2] that our seed is the foam of our better blood: Plato,[3] that it is the distillation of the marrow of the backbone, which he argues from the circumstance that that part is first sensible of being weary of the work: Alcmeon,[4] that it is a part of the substance of the brain, and this is shown, says he, inasmuch as it causes weakness of the eyes in those who immoderately labour in that exercise: Democritus,[5] that it is a substance extracted from the whole mass of the body: Epicurus,[6] that it is extracted from soul and body: Aristotle, an excrement drawn from the aliment of the blood, the last which is diffused through our members: others, that it is blood concocted and digested by the heat of the genitories, which they judge by reason that in excessive endeavours a man voids pure blood; wherein there seems to be the most likelihood, could a man extract any probability from so infinite a confusion. Now, to bring this seed to do its work, how many contrary opinions are set on foot! Aristotle and Democritus are of opinion[7] that women have no sperm, and that 'tis nothing but a sweat that they distil in the heat of pleasure and motion, and that contributes nothing at all to generation: Galen, on the contrary, and his followers, believe that without the concurrence of seeds there can be no generation. Here, again, are the physicians, the philosophers, the lawyers, and the divines, by the ears with our wives, about the dispute, "for what time women carry their fruit;" and I, for my part, by the example of myself, side with those who maintain that a woman goes eleven months with child. The world is built upon this experience; there is not so simple

[1] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 17.
[2] Plutarch, Opinions of the Philosophers, v. 3.
[3] Idem, ibid. [4] Idem, ibid. [5] Idem, ibid. [6] Idem. ibid.
[7] Plutarch (*ubi supra*) adds Zeno to Aristotle, and says expressly that Democritus believed that the females shed their seed.

a little woman that cannot give her judgment in all these controversies, and yet we cannot agree.

Here is enough to evidence that man is no better instructed in the knowledge of himself in his corporeal than in his spiritual part. We have proposed himself to himself, and his reason to his reason, to see what she could say. I think I have sufficiently demonstrated how little she understands herself in herself; and who understands not himself in himself, in what can he possibly understand? "Quasi vero mensuram ullius rei possit agere, qui sui nesciat."[1] Truly, Protagoras told us a pretty flam,[2] in making man the measure of all things who never knew so much as his own; if it be not he, his dignity will not permit that any other creature should have this advantage; now, he being so contrary in himself, and one judgment so incessantly subverting another, this favourable proposition was but a mockery, which led us necessarily to conclude the nullity of the compass and the compasser. When Thales[3] reputes the knowledge of man very difficult for man, he, at the same time, gives him to understand, that all other knowledge is impossible to him.

You, for whom I have taken the pains, contrary to my custom, to write so long a discourse, will not refuse to maintain your Sebonde by the ordinary forms of arguing wherein you are every day instructed, and in this will exercise your study. For this last fencing trick is never to be made use of but as an extreme remedy; 'tis a desperate thrust, wherein you are to quit your own arms to make your adversary abandon his; and a secret sleight, which must be very rarely and very reservedly put in practice. 'Tis great temerity to lose yourself, that you may destroy another; you must not die to be revenged, as Gobrias did; for, hotly grappling in combat with a Persian lord, Darius coming in, sword in hand, and fearing to strike lest he should kill Gobrias, he called out to him boldly to fall on, though he should run them both through at once.[4] I have known weapons and conditions of single combat, without

[1] "As if he could understand the measure of any other thing, that knows not his own."—PLINY, *Nat. Hist.*, ii. 1.
[2] Apud Sextus Empiricus, Advers. Mathem., p. 148.
[3] Diogenes Laertius, in vita. [4] Herodotus, iii. 78.

quarter, and wherein he who proposed them, put himself and his adversary upon terms of inevitable death to them both, censured as unjust. The Portuguese, in the Indian Sea, took certain Turks prisoners, who, impatient of their captivity, resolved (and it succeeded), by striking some ship nails against one another and making a spark fall into the barrels of powder that were in the place where they were confined, to blow up and reduce themselves, their masters, and the vessel to ashes. We touch here the outpale and utmost limits of the sciences, wherein the extremity is vicious, as in virtue. Keep yourselves in the common road; it is not good to be so subtle and cunning. Remember the Tuscan proverb—

"Chi troppo s'assottiglia, si scavezza."[1]

I advise you, in all your opinions and meditations, as well as in your manners and all other things, to keep yourself moderate and reserved, and to avoid all novelty and strangeness: I am an enemy to all out-of-the-way proceedings. You who by the authority of your greatness, and yet more by the advantages which those qualities give you that are more your own, may, with the twinkle of an eye, command whom you please, should give this charge to some professor of letters, who might, after a much better manner, have sustained and illustrated these things to you. But here is as much as you will stand in need of.

Epicurus said of the laws, that the worst were so necessary for us, that without them men would devour one another; and Plato affirms, that without laws we should live like beasts. Our mind is a wandering, dangerous, and temerarious tool; it is hard to couple any order or measure to it; and in my time, those who are endued with some rare excellence above others, or any extraordinary vivacity of understanding, we see almost all of them lash out into licence of opinions and manners; 'tis almost a miracle to find one temperate and socially tractable. There's all the reason in the world to limit the human mind within the strictest limits possible: in study, as in all the rest, we ought to have its steps and advances numbered and fixed,

[1] "If you draw your thread too fine it will break."—PETRARCA, *Canz.*, xi. 48.

and that the limits of its inquisition be bounded by art. It is curbed and fettered by religions, laws, customs, sciences, precepts, mortal and immortal penalties and rewards; and yet we see that by its volubility and dissolvability it escapes from all these bounds; 'tis a vain body which has nothing to lay hold on or to seize; a various and difform body, incapable of being either bound or held. Truly, there are few souls so regular, firm, and well descended, that are to be trusted with their own conduct, and that can, with moderation, and without temerity, sail in the liberty of their own judgments, beyond the common and received opinions: 'tis more expedient to put them under pupilage. The mind is a dangerous weapon, even to the possessor, if he knows not discreetly how to use it; and there is not a beast to whom a headboard can more properly be given to keep his looks down and before his feet, and to hinder him from wandering here and there out of the tracks which custom and the laws have laid before him: therefore it will be much better for you to keep yourself in the beaten path, let it be what it will, than to fly out at a venture with this unbridled liberty. If any of these new doctors should seek to exercise his ingenuity in your presence, at the expense both of your soul and his own, to avoid this dangerous plague, which is every day laid in your way, this preservative, in extremest necessity, will prevent the contagion of this poison from offending either you or your company.

The liberty, then, and frolic forwardness of these ancient wits, produced in philosophy and human sciences, several sects of different opinions, each undertaking to judge and make choice of what he would stick to and maintain. But now that men go all one way, "Qui certis quibusdam destinatisque sententiis addicti et consecrati sunt, ut etiam, quæ non probant, cogantur defendere,"[1] and that we receive the arts by civil authority and decree, so that the schools have but one pattern and a like circumscribed institution and discipline, we no longer take notice what the coin weighs and is really worth, but every one receives

[1] "Who are so tied and obliged to certain beliefs, that they are bound to defend even those they do not approve."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 2.

it according to the estimate that the common approbation and the ordinary course put upon it: the alloy is not disputed, but how much it is current for. In like manner, all things pass; we take physic as we do geometry, and tricks of hocus-pocus, enchantments, codpiece-points, correspondence with souls of the dead, prognostications, domifications,[1] and even this ridiculous pursuit of the philosopher's stone, all things pass for current pay, without scruple or contradiction. We need to know no more but that Mars' house is in the middle of the triangle of the hand, that of Venus in the thumb, and that of Mercury in the little finger; that when the table-line cuts the tubercle of the forefinger, 'tis a sign of cruelty; that when it falls short of the middle finger, and that the natural medium line makes an angle with the vital in the same side, 'tis a sign of a miserable death; that if, in a woman, the natural line be open, and does not close the angle with the vital, this denotes that she will not be very chaste; I leave you to judge whether a man, thus qualified, may not pass with reputation and esteem in all companies.

Theophrastus said that human knowledge, guided by the senses, might judge of the causes of things to a certain degree; but that being arrived at extreme and first causes, it must stop short, and retire, by reason either of its own infirmity, or the difficulty of things. 'Tis a moderate and gentle opinion, that our own understanding may conduct us to the knowledge of some things, and that it has certain measures of power, beyond which 'tis temerity to employ it; this opinion is plausible, and introduced by men of well-composed minds. But 'tis hard to limit our mind; 'tis inquisitive and greedy, and will no more stop at a thousand, than at fifty paces; having experimentally found that, wherein one man has failed, another has hit; that what was unknown to one age, the age following has explained; and that arts and sciences are not cast in a mould, but are formed and perfected by degrees, by often handling and polishing, as bears leisurely lick their cubs into shape; what my force cannot discover, I do not yet desist to sound and to try;

[1] The dividing of the heavens into twelve squares or houses, for astrological purposes.

and, handling and kneading this new matter over and over again, turning and heating it, I lay open to him, that shall succeed me, a kind of facility to enjoy it more at his ease, and make it more manageable and supple for him:

"Ut Hymettia sole
Cera remollescit, tractataque pollice multas
Vertitur in facies, ipsoque fit utilis usu:"[1]

as much will the second do to the third, which is the reason that difficulty ought not to make me despair; and my own incapacity as little; for 'tis only my own.

Man is as capable of all things, as of some: and if he confess, as Theophrastus says, the ignorance of first causes and principles, let him boldly surrender to me all the rest of his knowledge; if he is defective in foundation, his reason is on the ground: disputation and inquisition have no other aim but principles; if this do not stop his career, he runs into an infinite irresolution. "Non potest aliud alio magis minusve comprehendi, quoniam omnium rerum una est definitio comprehendendi."[2] Now, 'tis very likely, that if the soul knew anything, it would in the first place know itself; and if it knew anything out of itself, it would be its own body and case, before anything else: if we see the gods of physic, to this very day, debating about our anatomy,

"Mulciber in Trojam, pro Troja stabat Apollo:"[3]

when are we to expect that they will be agreed? We are nearer neighbours to ourselves than the whiteness of snow or the weight of stones are to us: if man does not know himself, how should he know his functions and powers? It is not, peradventure, that we have not some real knowledge in us, but 'tis by chance; and forasmuch as errors are received into our soul by the same way, after the same

[1] "As Hymettian wax grows softer in the sun, and tempered by the fingers assumes various forms, and is rendered fit for use."—OVID, *Met.*, x. 284.

[2] "One thing can be no more or less comprehended than another, because there is only one definition of comprehending all things."—CICERO, *Acad.*, ii. 41.

[3] "Vulcan against, for Troy Apollo stood."—OVID. *Trist.*, i. 2, 5.

manner and by the same conduct, it has not wherewithal to distinguish them, nor wherewithal to choose the truth from falsehood.

The Academics admitted a certain inclination of judgment, and thought it too crude to say, "that it was not more likely that snow was white than black, and that we were no more assured of the motion of a stone thrown by the hand than of that of the eighth sphere;" and to avoid this difficulty and strangeness, which can, in truth, not easily lodge in our imagination, though they conclude that we are in no sort capable of knowledge, and that truth is engulfed in so profound an abyss as is not to be penetrated by human sight; yet do they acknowledge some things to be more likely than others, and received into their judgment this faculty that we have a power to incline to one appearance more than to another: they allowed this propension, interdicting all resolution. The opinion of the Pyrrhonians is more bold, and also more likely: for this Academic inclination, and this propension to one proposition rather than to another, what is it other than a recognition of some more apparent truth in this than in that? If our understanding be capable of the form, lineaments, comportment, and face of truth, it would as well see it entire as by halves, springing and imperfect: this appearance of likelihood, which makes them rather take the left hand than the right, augments it: multiply this ounce of verisimilitude that turns the scales, to a hundred, to a thousand ounces: it will happen in the end that the balance will itself end the controversy, and determine one choice and one entire truth. But how is it they suffer themselves to incline to and be swayed by probability, if they know not the truth itself? How should they know the simultude of that whereof they do not know the essence? Either we can absolutely judge, or absolutely we cannot. If our intellectual and sensible faculties are without foot or foundation, if they only float and waver about, 'tis to no purpose that we suffer our judgment to be carried away by any part of their operation, what appearance soever it may seem to present to us; and the surest and most happy seat of our understanding would be that where it kept itself temperate, upright, and inflexible, without tottering and without agitation: "Inter visa vera, aut falsa,

ad animi assensum, nihil interest.[1] That things do not lodge in us in their form and essence, and do not there make their entry by their own force and authority, we sufficiently see: because if it were so, we should receive them after the same manner: wine would have the same relish with the sick as with the healthful; he who has his finger chapped or benumbed would find the same hardness in wood or iron that he handles that another does; outside subjects, then, submit themselves to our disposal, and are seated in us as we please. Now, if on our part we received anything without alteration, if human grasp were capable and strong enough to seize on truth by our own means, these being common to all men, this truth would be conveyed from hand to hand from one to another; and, at least there would be some one thing to be found in the world, amongst so many as there are, that would be believed by men with an universal consent: but this, that there is no one proposition that is not debated and controverted amongst us, or that may not be, makes it very manifest that our natural judgment does not very clearly comprehend what it embraces; for my judgment cannot make itself accepted by the judgment of my companion, which is a sign that I seized it by some other means than by a natural power that is in me and in all other men.

Let us lay aside this infinite confusion of opinions which we see even amongst the philosophers themselves, and this perpetual and universal dispute about the knowledge of things; for this is very truly presupposed, that men—I mean those highest and best born in knowledge, and of the greatest parts—are not agreed about any one thing, not even that heaven is over our heads, for they that doubt of everything also doubt of that; and they who deny that we are able to comprehend anything, say that we have not comprehended that the heaven is above our heads; and these two opinions are without comparison the stronger in number.

Besides this infinite diversity and division, through the trouble that our judgment gives to ourselves, and the uncer-

[1] "As between things that seem, whether true or false, it signifies nothing to the assent of the mind."—CICERO, *Acad.*, ii. 28.

tainty that every one is sensible of in himself, 'tis easy to perceive that its seat is very unstable and unsecure. How variously do we judge of things? how often do we alter our opinions? What I hold and believe to-day, I hold and believe with my whole belief: all my instruments and engines seize and take hold of this opinion, and become responsible to me for it as much as in them lies; I could not embrace nor preserve any truth with greater assurance than I do this; I am wholly and entirely possessed with it: but has it not befallen me, not only once, but a thousand times, and every day, to have embraced some other thing with the same instruments, and in the same condition, which I have since judged to be false? A man must, at least, become wise at his own expense; if I have often found myself betrayed under this colour, if my touch prove ordinarily false and my balance unequal and unjust, what assurance can I now have more than at other times? is it not folly to suffer myself to be so often deceived by my guide? Nevertheless, let fortune remove and shift us five hundred times from place to place, let her do nothing but incessantly empty and fill into our belief, as into a vessel other and other opinions, yet still the present and the last is the one certain and infallible: for this we must abandon goods, honour, life, health, and all.

"Posterior . . . res illa reperta
Perdit et immutat sensus ad pristina quæque."[1]

Whatever is preached to us, whatever we learn, we should still remember that it is man that gives and man that receives; 'tis a mortal hand that presents it to us, 'tis a mortal hand that accepts it. The things that come to us from heaven have the sole right and authority of persuasion, the sole mark of truth: which also we do not see with our own eyes nor receive by our own means: that great and sacred image could not abide in so wretched a habitation, if God, for this end, did not prepare it, if God did not, by His particular and supernatural grace and favour, fortify and reform it. At least our frail and defective condition ought

[1] "The last thing we find out is ever the best, and makes us disrelish all the former."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1413.

to make us comport ourselves with more reservedness and moderation in our innovations and changes: we ought to remember that whatever we receive into the understanding we often receive things that are false, and that it is by the same instruments that so often give themselves the lie, and are so often deceived.

Now, it is no wonder they should so often contradict themselves, being so easy to be turned and swayed by very light occurrences. It is certain that our apprehension, our judgment, and the faculties of the soul in general, suffer according to the movements and alterations of the body, which alterations are continual: are not our wits more sprightly, our memory more prompt, our discourse more lively, in health than in sickness? Do not joy and gaiety make us receive subjects that present themselves to our souls, quite otherwise than care and melancholy? Do you believe that the verses of Catullus or of Sappho please an old doting miser as they do a vigorous and amorous young man? Cleomenes, the son of Anaxandridas, being sick, his friends reproached him that he had humours and whimsies that were new and unaccustomed: "I believe it," said he, "neither am I the same man now as when I am in health: being now another thing, my opinions and fancies are also other than they were before."[1] In our courts of justice 'tis said of criminals, when they find the judges in a good humour, gentle and mild, "gaudeat de bona fortuna."[2] For it is most certain that men's judgments are sometimes more prone to condemnation, more sharp and severe, and at others more facile, easy, and inclined to excuse. He that carries with him from his house, the pain of the gout, jealousy, or theft by his man, having his whole soul possessed with anger, it is not to be doubted but that his judgment will be warped in that direction. That venerable senate of the Areopagus was wont to hear and determine by night, for fear lest the sight of the parties might corrupt their justice. The very air itself and the serenity of heaven will cause some mutation in us, according to the Greek verses rendered in Cicero,

[1] Plutarch, Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.
[2] Let him rejoice in his good fortune.

"Tales sunt hominum mentes, quali pater ipse
Juppiter auctifera lustravit lampade terras."[1]

'Tis not only fevers, debauches, and great accidents that overthrow our judgment; the least things in the world will do it; and we are not to doubt, though we are not sensible of it, but that if a continued fever can overwhelm the soul, a tertian will in some proportionate measure alter it; if an apoplexy can stupify and totally extinguish the sight of our understanding, we are not to doubt but that a great cold will dazzle it; and consequently there is hardly a single hour in a man's life wherein our judgment is in its due place and right condition, our bodies being subject to so many continual changes, and replete with so many several sorts of springs, that I believe what the physicians say, how hard it is but that there will not be always some one or other out of order.

As to what remains, this malady does not very easily discover itself, unless it be extreme and past remedy; forasmuch as reason goes always lame and halting, and that as well with falsehood as with truth; and therefore 'tis hard to discover her deviations and mistakes. I always call that appearance of meditation which every one forges in himself, reason: this reason, of the condition of which there may be a hundred contrary ones about the same subject, is an instrument of lead and wax, ductile, pliable, and accommodable to all sorts of biasses and to all measures, so that nothing remains but the knowledge how to turn and mould it. How uprightly soever a judge may resolve to act, if he do not well look to himself, which few care to do, his inclination to friendship, to relationship, to beauty, or revenge, and not only things of that weight, but even the fortuitous instinct that makes us favour one thing more than another, and that, without the reason's leave, puts the choice upon us in two equal subjects, or some other shadowy futility may insensibly insinuate into his judgment the recommendation or disfavour of a cause, and make the balance dip.

I, who watch myself as narrowly as I can, and who have

[1] "The minds of men are dark or serene, as the day is foul or fair."—*From* HOMER'S *Odyssey*, xviii. 135.

my eyes continually bent upon myself, like one that has no great business elsewhere to do,

> "Quis sub Arcto
> Rex gelidæ metuatur oræ,
> Quid Tiridatem terreat, unice
> Securus,"[1]

dare hardly tell the vanity and weakness I find in myself; my foot is so unstable and stands so slippery, I find it so apt to totter and reel, and my sight so disordered, that fasting I am quite another man than when full; if health and a fair day smile upon me, I am a very good fellow; if a corn trouble my toe, I am sullen, out of humour, and inaccessible. The same pace of a horse seems to me one while hard and another easy; the same way, one while shorter and another while longer; the same form, one while more, and another while less, taking. Now I am for doing everything, and then for doing nothing at all; what pleases me now would be a trouble to me at another time. I have a thousand senseless and casual humours within myself; either I am possessed by melancholy, or swayed by choler; now, by its own private authority, sadness predominates in me, and, by and by, I am as merry as a cricket. When I take a book in hand, I have discovered admirable graces in such and such passages, and such as have struck my soul: let me light upon them at another time, I may turn and toss, tumble and rattle the leaves to much purpose; 'tis then to me a shapeless and unrecognizable mass. Even in my own writings, I do not always find the air of my first fancy: I know not what I meant to say; and am often put to it to correct and pump for a new sense, because I have lost the first that was better. I do nothing but go and come: my judgment does not always advance; it floats and wanders,

> "Velut minuta magno
> Deprensa navis in mari, vesaniente vento."[2]

Very often, as I am apt to do, having for sport and exercise

[1] "Secure, whatever king rules the stubborn north, or what affrights Tiridates."—HOR., *Od.* i. 26, 3.

[2] "Like a small bark upon the great sea, when the winds ruffle it."—CATULLUS, *Ep.* xxv. 12.

undertaken to maintain an opinion contrary to my own, my mind bending and applying itself that way, so strongly engages me there, that I no longer discern the reason of my former belief, and forsake it. I am, as it were, drawn on to the side to which I lean, be it what it will, and carried away by my own weight.

Every one would almost say the same of himself, if he considered himself as I do; preachers very well know that the emotions which steal upon them in speaking animate them towards belief; and in a passion we are more stiff in the defence of our proposition, receive a deeper impression of it and embrace it with greater vehemence and approbation, than we do in our colder and more temperate senses. You give your counsel a simple brief of your cause; he returns you a dubious and uncertain answer: you feel that he is indifferent which side he takes: have you fee'd him well that he may consider it the better? does he begin to be really concerned? and do you find him truly interested and zealous in your quarrel? His reason and learning will by degrees grow hot in your cause; a manifest and undoubted truth presents itself to his understanding; he discovers an altogether new light in your business, and does in good earnest believe and persuade himself that it is so. Nay, I do not know whether the ardour that springs from spite and obstinacy, against the power and violence of the magistrate and danger, or the interest of reputation, may not have made some men, even to the stake, maintain the opinion for which, at liberty and amongst friends, he would not have burned the tip of his finger. The shocks and jostles that the soul receives from the passions of the body can do much in it, but its own can do a great deal more; to the which it is so subjected that, peradventure, it may be established that it has no other pace and motion but from the breath of those winds, without the agitation of which it would be becalmed and without action, like a ship in the open sea, to which the winds have denied their assistance: and whoever should maintain this, siding with the Peripatetics, would do us no great wrong, seeing it is very well known that most of the finest actions of the soul proceed from and stand in need of this impulse of the passions; valour, they say, cannot be perfect

without the assistance of anger; "Semper Ajax fortis, fortissimus tamen in furore,"[1] neither do we encounter the wicked and the enemy vigorously enough, if we be not angry; nay, the advocate has to inspire the judges with anger, to obtain justice.

Strong desires moved Themistocles, moved Demosthenes, and have pushed on the philosophers to work, watching, and pilgrimages; they lead us to honour, learning, health, all very useful ends: and this weakness of the soul in suffering anxiety and trouble serves to breed in the conscience penitence and repentance, and to make us see in the scourge of God and political troubles, the chastisement of our offences. Compassion is a spur to clemency; and prudence to preserve and govern ourselves is aroused by our fear; and how many brave actions have been born of ambition? how many by presumption? In a word, there is no eminent and sprightly virtue without some irregular agitation. Should not this be one of the reasons that moved the Epicureans to discharge God from all care and solicitude of our affairs, because even the effects of His goodness could not be exercised in our behalf, without disturbing His repose, by the means of passions, which are so many spurs and instruments pricking on the soul to virtuous actions? or have they thought otherwise, and taken them for tempests that shamefully hurry the soul from her tranquillity? "Ut maris tranquillitas intelligitur, nulla, ne minima quidem, aura fluctus commovente: sic animi quietus et placatus status cernitur, quum perturbatio nulla est, qua moveri queat."[2]

What varieties of sense and reason, what contrarieties of imaginations, do the diversity of our passions present to us? What assurance, then, can we take of a thing so mobile and unstable, subject, by its condition, to the dominion of trouble, and never going other than a forced and borrowed pace? If our judgment be in the power

[1] "Ajax was always brave, but most so when in a fury."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, iv. 23.

[2] "As it is understood to be a calm at sea when there is not the least breath of air stirring, so the state of the soul is discerned to be quiet and appeased, when there is no perturbation to move it."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 6.

even of sickness and perturbation; if it be from craze and temerity that it has to receive the impression of things, what security can we expect from it?

Is it not a great boldness in philosophy to believe that men perform the greatest actions, those nearest approaching the divinity, when they are furious, mad, and beside themselves?[1] we are to better ourselves by the deadening and privation of our reason; the two natural ways to enter into the cabinet of the Gods, and there to foresee the course of destiny, are fury and sleep:[2] this is pleasant to consider; by the dislocation that passions cause in our reason, we become virtuous; by its extirpation, occasioned by fury, or the image of death, we become diviners and prophets. I was never so willing to believe philosophy in anything as in this. 'Tis a pure enthusiasm wherewith sacred truth has inspired the spirit of philosophy, which makes it confess, contrary to its own proposition, that the most calm, composed, and healthful estate of the soul that philosophy can seat it in, is not its best condition: our wisdom is less wise than folly: our dreams are worth more than our meditation: the worst place we can take is in ourselves. But does not philosophy think that we are wise enough to remark that the voice that the spirit utters, when dismissed from man, so clear-sighted, so grand, so perfect, and, whilst it is in man, so terrestrial, ignorant, and obscure, is a voice proceeding from the spirit which is in obscure, terrestrial, and ignorant man, and, for this reason, a voice not to be trusted and believed?

I have no great experience of these vehement agitations, being of a soft and heavy complexion, the most of which surprise the soul on a sudden, without giving it leisure to recollect itself: but the passion that is said to be produced by idleness in the hearts of young men, though it proceed leisurely and with a measured progress, evidently manifests to those who have tried to oppose its power, the violence our judgment suffers in the alteration and conversion. I have formerly attempted to withstand and repel it; for I am so far from being one of those who invite vices, that I do not so much as follow them, if they do not haul me

[1] Plato, Phædrus. [2] Cicero, De Div., i. 57.

along: I perceived it to spring, grow, and increase in despite of my resistance, and at last, living and seeing as I was, wholly to seize and possess me, so that, as if newly roused from drunkenness, the images of things began to appear to me quite other than they were wont to be; I evidently saw the person I desired, grow and increase in advantages of beauty, and to expand and develop fairer by the influence of my imagination; the difficulties of my pursuit to grow more easy and smooth; and both my reason and conscience to be laid aside: but, this fire being evaporated, in an instant, as from a flash of lightning, I was aware that my soul resumed another kind of sight, another state, and another judgment; the difficulties of retreat appeared great and invincible, and the same things had quite another taste and aspect than the heat of desire had presented them to me. Which of these most probably? Pyrrho himself knows nothing about it. We are never without sickness: fevers have their hot and cold fits; from the effects of an ardent passion, we fall into a shivering passion; as far as I had advanced, so much I retired:

> "Qualis ubi alterno procurrens gurgite pontus,
> Nunc ruit ad terras, scopulosque superjacit undam
> Spumeus, extremamque sinu perfundit arenam;
> Nunc rapidus retro, atque æstu revoluta resorbens
> Saxa, fugit, littusque vado labente relinquit."[1]

Now, from the knowledge of this volubility of mine, I have accidentally begot in myself a certain constancy of opinion, and have not much altered those that were first and natural in me: for what appearance soever there may be in novelty, I do not easily change, for fear of losing by the bargain: and since I am not capable of choosing, I take other men's choice, and keep myself in the state wherein God has placed me; I could not otherwise prevent myself from perpetual rolling. Thus have I, by the grace of God, preserved myself entire, without anxiety or trouble of conscience, in

1 "As when the sea, rolling with alternate tides, now rushes on the land and foaming throws over the rocks its waves, and with its skirts overflows the extremity of the strand: now, with rapid motion, and sucking in the stones, rolled back with the tide in its retreat, and with the ebbing current leaves the shore."—*Æneid*, xi. 624.

the ancient belief of our religion, amidst so many sects and divisions as our age has produced. The writings of the ancients, the best authors I mean, being full and solid, tempt and carry me which way almost they will: he, that I am reading, seems always to have the most force, and I find that every one of them in turn has reason, though they contradict one another. The facility that good wits have of rendering everything they would recommend likely, and that there is nothing so strange to which they will not undertake to give colour enough to deceive such a simplicity as mine, this evidently shows the weakness of their testimony. The heavens and the stars have been three thousand years in motion; all the world were of that belief, till Cleanthes the Samian,[1] or, according to Theophrastus, Nicetas of Syracuse, bethought him to maintain that it was the earth that moved, turning about its axis by the oblique circle of the zodiac; and in our time Copernicus has so grounded this doctrine, that it very regularly serves to all astrological consequences: what use can we make of this, except that we need not much care which is the true opinion? And who knows but that a third, a thousand years hence, may overthrow the two former?

> "Sic volvenda ætas commutat tempora rerum;
> Quod fuit in pretio, fit nullo denique honore;
> Porro aliud succedit, et e contemptibus exit,
> Inque dies magis appetitur, floretque repertum
> Laudibus, et miro est mortales inter honore."[2]

So that when any new doctrine presents itself to us, we have great reason to mistrust it, and to consider that before it was set on foot, the contrary had been in vogue; and that as that has been overthrown by this, a third invention in time to come, may start up which may knock the second on the head. Before the principles that Aristotle introduced were in reputation, other principles contented human reason, as these satisfy us now. What letters-

[1] Plutarch on the Face of the Moon, c. 4.

[2] "For thus revolving time changes the seasons of things; that which was once in estimation becomes of no reputation at all, while another thing succeeds and bursts forth from contempt, is daily more sought, and, when found, flourishes among mankind with praise and wonderful honour."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1275.

patent have these, what particular privilege, that the career of our invention must be stopped by them, and that to them should appertain for all time to come the possession of our belief? They are no more exempt from being thrust out of doors than their predecessors were. When any one presses me with a new argument, I ought to consider that what I cannot answer, another may: for to believe all likelihoods that a man cannot himself confute, is great simplicity; it would by that means come to pass, that all the vulgar, and we are all of the vulgar, would have their belief as turnable as a weathercock: for the soul, being so easily imposed upon and without resisting power, would be forced incessantly to receive other and other impressions, the last still effacing all footsteps of that which went before. He that finds himself weak, ought to answer as in law questions, that he will speak with his counsel; or will refer himself to the wise from whom he received his teaching. How long is it that physic has been practised in the world? 'Tis said that a new comer, called Paracelsus, changes and overthrows the whole order of ancient rules, and maintains that till now it has been of no other use but to kill men. I believe that he will easily make this good; but I do not think it were wisdom to venture my life in making trial of his new experiments. We are not to believe every one, says the precept, because every one can say all things. A man of this profession of novelties and physical reformations, not long since told me that all the ancients were notoriously mistaken in the nature and motions of the winds, which he would evidently demonstrate to me, if I would give him the hearing. After I had with some patience heard his arguments, which were all full of likelihood of truth: "What then," said I, "did those that sailed according to Theophrastus, make way westward when they had the prow towards the east! did they go sideward or backward?" "That was according to fortune," answered he; "but, be that as it may, they were mistaken." I then replied that I had rather follow effects than reason. Now these things often clash, and I have been told that in geometry, which pretends to have gained the highest point of certainty among all the sciences, there are found inevitable demonstrations that subvert the truth of all experience;

as Jacques Peletier told me at my own house, that he had found out two lines stretching themselves one towards the other to meet, which, nevertheless, he affirmed, though extended to all infinity, could never reach to touch one another. And the Pyrrhonians make no other use of their arguments and their reason than to ruin the appearance of experience; and 'tis a wonder how far the suppleness of our reason has followed them in this design of controverting the evidence of effects: for they affirm that we do not move, that we do not speak, and that there is neither weight nor heat, with the same force of argument, that we affirm the most likely things. Ptolemy, who was a great man, had established the bounds of this world of ours: all the ancient philosophers thought they had the measure of it, excepting some remote isles that might escape their knowledge; it had been Pyrrhonism, a thousand years ago, to doubt the science of cosmography, and the opinions that every one had thence received: it was heresy to believe in Antipodes; and behold! in this age of ours there is an infinite extent of *terra firma* discovered, not an island or a particular country, but a part very nearly equal in greatness to that we knew before. The geographers of our times stick not to assure us, that now all is found, all is seen;

"Nam quod adest præsto, placet, et pollere videtur."[1]

But the question is whether, if Ptolemy was therein formerly deceived, upon the foundations of his reason, it were not very foolish to trust now in what these later people say: and whether it is not more likely that this great body, which we call the world, is not quite another thing than what we imagine.

Plato says that it changes its aspect in all respects; that the heavens, the stars, and the sun have all of them sometimes motions retrograde to what we see, changing east into west. The Egyptian priests told Herodotus, that from the time of their first king, which was eleven thousand and odd years before (and they showed him the effigies of all their kings in statues taken from the life), the sun had four times altered his course: that the sea and the earth

1 "What is pleasant pleases, and seems the best."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1411.

alternately change into one another; that the beginning of the world is undetermined: Aristotle and Cicero both say the same; and one amongst us is of opinion that it has been from all eternity, is mortal, and renewed again by successive vicissitudes, calling Solomon and Isaiah to witness: and this to evade these objections that God has once been a creator without a creature; that He had had nothing to do; that He abandoned this idleness by putting His hand to this work; and that, consequently, He is subject to changes. In the most famous of the Greek schools,[1] the world is taken for a god, made by another god greater than he, and is composed of a body, and of a soul fixed in his centre, and dilating himself, by musical numbers, to his circumference: divine, infinitely happy, infinitely great, infinitely wise, and eternal: in him are other gods, the sea, the earth, the stars, who entertain one another with a harmonious and perpetual agitation and divine dance: sometimes meeting, sometimes retiring; concealing, discovering themselves; changing their order, one while before, and another behind. Heraclitus[2] was positive that the world was composed of fire, and, by the order of destiny, was one day to be enflamed and consumed in fire, and then to be again renewed. And Apuleius says of men: "Sigillatim mortales, cunctim perpetui."[3] Alexander wrote to his mother[4] the narration of an Egyptian priest, drawn from their monuments, testifying the antiquity of that nation to be infinite, and comprising the birth and progress of other countries. Cicero and Diodorus[5] say, that in their time, the Chaldeans kept a register of four hundred thousand and odd years; Aristotle, Pliny,[6] and others, that Zoroaster flourished six thousand years before Plato's time. Plato says that they of the city of Sais have records in writing of eight thousand years, and that the city of Athens was built a thousand years before the said city of Sais. Epicurus,

[1] That of Plato.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, ix. 8.

[3] "That they are mortal in particular, and immortal in general." —*De Deo Socratis.*

[4] The letter is most probably apocryphal; at all events it is now lost.

[5] Cicero, De Div., i. 19; Diodorus, ii. 31.

[6] Nat. Hist., xxx. 1.

that at the same time things are here as we see them, they are alike and in the same manner in several other worlds; which he would have delivered with greater assurance, had he seen the similitudes and concordances of the new discovered world of the West Indies, with ours present and past, in so many strange examples.

In earnest, considering what has arrived at our knowledge from the course of this terrestrial polity, I have often wondered to see in so vast a distance of places and times, such a concurrence of so great a number of popular and wild opinions, and of savage manners and beliefs, which by no tendency seem to proceed from our natural meditation. Human wit is a great worker of miracles. But this relation has in it circumstances especially extraordinary; 'tis found to be in names also and a thousand other things: for they discovered nations there that, for aught we know, never heard of us, where circumcision was in use:[1] where there were states and great civil governments maintained by women only without men; where our fasts and Lent were represented, to which was added the abstinence from women: where our crosses were several ways in repute: here they were made use of to honour and adorn their sepultures; there they were erected, and notably that of St. Andrew, to protect people from nocturnal visions, and to lay upon the cradles of infants against enchantments; elsewhere, there was found one of wood, of very great stature, which was adored as the god of rain, and this a long way into the main land, and there was also seen an express image of our shriving-priests, with the use of mitres, the celibacy of the priesthood, the art of divination by the entrails of sacrificed beasts, abstinence from all sorts of flesh and fish in their diet, the custom of priests officiating in a particular and not the vulgar language: and this fancy, that the first god was expelled by a second, his younger brother: that men were created with all sorts of conveniences, which have since been taken from them for their sins, their territory changed, and their natural condition made worse: that they were of old overwhelmed by the inundation of waters from heaven; that but few families

[1] Many of these illustrations are altogether disputable.

escaped, who retired into the caves of high mountains, the mouths of which they stopped so that the waters could not get in, having shut up, together with themselves, several sorts of animals; that when they perceived the rain to cease, they sent out dogs, which returning clean and wet, they judged that the water was not much abated; afterward, sending out others, and seeing them return dirty, they issued out to repeople the world, which they found only full of serpents. In one place some found the persuasion of a day of judgment, insomuch that the people were marvellously displeased with the Spaniards for disturbing the bones of the dead in rifling the sepultures for riches, saying that those bones, so disordered, could not easily rejoin; traffic by exchange, and no other way; fairs and markets for that end: dwarfs and deformed people for the ornament of the tables of princes; the use of falconry, according to the nature of their hawks; tyrannical subsidies: great refinements in gardens; dances, tumbling tricks, music of instruments, coats of arms, tennis-courts, dice and games of hazard, wherein they are sometimes so eager and hot, as to stake and play themselves and their liberty; physic, no otherwise than by charms; the way of writing in cypher; the belief of only one first man, the father of all nations: the adoration of a god, who formerly lived a man in perfect virginity, fasting and penitence, preaching the law of nature and the ceremonies of religion, and who vanished from the world without a natural death; the belief in giants; the custom of making themselves drunk with their beverages and drinking to the utmost; religious ornaments painted with bones and dead men's skulls: surplices, holy water sprinkling; wives and servants who present themselves with emulation, to be burned and interred with the dead husband or master; a law by which the eldest succeeds to all the estate, no other portion being left for the younger but obedience: the custom that upon promotion to a certain office of great authority, the promoted is to take upon him a new name and to leave that he had before: another, to strew lime upon the knee of the new-born child, with these words; "From dust thou camest, and to dust thou must return:" the art of augury. These vain shadows of our religion, which are observable

in some of these examples, are testimonies of its dignity and divinity; not only has it in some sort insinuated itself into all the infidel nations on this side of the world, by a certain imitation, but into these barbarians also, as by a common and supernatural inspiration; for we found there the belief of purgatory, but of a new form; that which we give to the fire, they give to the cold, and imagine that souls are both purged and punished by the rigour of an excessive coldness. And this example puts me in mind of another pleasant diversity: for as there were, on the one hand, found people who took a pride to unmuffle the glands of their members, and clipped off the prepuce after the Mahommedan and Jewish manner, there were others who made so great a scruple about laying it bare, that they carefully pursed it up with little strings to keep that end from peeping into the air; and of this other diversity, that whereas we, to honour kings and festivals, put on the best clothes we have, in some of these regions, to express their disparity and submission to their king, his subjects present themselves before him in their vilest habits, and, entering his palace, throw some old tattered garment over their better apparel, to the end that all the lustre and ornament may solely remain in him But to proceed.

If nature enclose within the bounds of her ordinary progress, as well as all other things, the beliefs, judgments, and opinions of men: if they have their revolution, their season, their birth and death, like cabbages; if the heavens agitate and rule them at their pleasure, what magisterial and permanent authority are we to attribute to them? If we experimentally see that the form of our being depends upon the air, upon the climate, and upon the soil where we are born, and not only the colour, the stature, the complexion, and the countenances, but moreover the very faculties of the soul itself; "et plaga cœli non solum ad robur corporum, sed etiam animorum facit,"[1] says Vegetius; and that the goddess who founded the city of Athens chose to situate it in a temperature of air fit to make men sharp, as the Egyptian priests told Solon, "Athenis tenue cœlum; ex quo etiam acutiores putantur Attici: crassum Thebis;

[1] "The climate is of great efficacy, not only to the strength of bodies, but to that of souls also."—VEGETIUS, i. 2.

itaque pingues Thebani, et valentes;"[1] so that as fruits and animals are born differing, men should also be born more or less warlike, just, temperate, and docile; here given to wine, elsewhere to theft or lechery; here inclined to superstition, elsewhere to misbelief; in one place to liberty, in another to servitude; capable of one science or of one art; dull or ingenious, obedient or mutinous, good or ill, according as the place where they are seated inclines them; and assume a new complexion, if removed like trees: which was the reason why Cyrus would not grant the Persians leave to quit their rough and craggy country to remove to another more pleasant and level, saying,[2] that soft and fertile soils made men effeminate and unfertile. If we see one while one art, one belief flourish, and another while another, through some celestial influence: such an age produce such natures and incline mankind in such and such a direction: the spirits of men one while gay and another grum, like our fields: what becomes of all those fine prerogatives we so sooth ourselves with? Seeing that a wise man may be mistaken, a hundred men, a hundred nations, nay, that even human nature itself, as we believe, is many ages wide in one thing or another, what assurance have we that she sometimes is not mistaken, or not in this very age of ours?

Methinks, amongst other testimonies of our imbecility, this ought not to be forgotten, that man cannot, by his own wish and desire, find out what is necessary for him; that, not in fruition only, but in imagination and wish, we cannot agree about what we would have to content us. Let us leave it to our thought to cut out and make up at its pleasure: it cannot so much as covet what is proper for it, and satisfy itself:

> "Quid enim ratione timemus,
> Aut cupimus? Quid tam dextro pede concipis, ut te
> Conatus non pœniteat, votique peracti?"[3]

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[1] "The air of Athens is subtle and thin: whence also the Athenians are reputed to be more acute: and at Thebes more gross and thick, wherefore the Thebans are looked upon as more heavy-witted and stronger of body."—CICERO, *De Fato*, c. 4.

[2] Herodotus, ix. 121.

[3] "For with what reason does man wish or fear? What is

And therefore it was that Socrates begged nothing of the gods but what they knew to be best for him; and the, both private and public, prayers of the Lacedæmonians were only simply to obtain good and useful things, referring the choice and selection of these to the discretion of the Supreme Power:[1]

> "Conjugium petimus, partumque uxoris; at illis
> Notum, qui pueri, qualisque futura sit uxor;"[2]

and Christians pray to God "that His will may be done:" that they may not fall into the inconvenience the poets feign of King Midas. He prayed to the gods that all he touched might be turned into gold: his prayer was heard; his wine was gold, his bread was gold, the feathers of his bed, his shirt and clothes were all turned into gold, so that he found himself overwhelmed under the fruition of his desire, and enriched with an intolerable commodity, and was fain to unpray his prayers:

> "Attonitus novitate mali, divesque, miserque,
> Effugere optat opes, et, quæ modo voverat, odit."[3]

To instance in myself: when young, I desired of fortune above all things the order of St. Michael, which was then the utmost distinction of honour amongst the French noblesse, and very rare. She pleasantly gratified my longing; instead of raising me and lifting me up from my own place to attain it, she was much kinder to me, for she brought it so low and made it so cheap that it stooped down to my shoulders, and lower. Cleobis and Biton,[4] Trophonius and Agamedes,[5] having requested, the first of their goddess, the last of their god, a recompense worthy

there, however dexterously conceived, that afterwards he may not repent, both the attempt and even the success?"—JUVENAL, x. 4.

[1] Plato, Second Alcibiades.

[2] "We pray for a wife and children; they above only know when we have them what they will prove."—*Idem, ibid.*, 352.

[3] "Astonished at the strangeness of the evil, at once rich and poor, he wishes now to escape wealth, and hates the thing for which before he prayed."—OVID, *Met.*, xi. 128.

[4] Herodotus, i. 31.

[5] Plutarch, Consolation to Apollonius, c. 14.

of their piety, had death for a reward; so differing are the heavenly opinions concerning what is fit for us from our own. God might grant us riches, honours, life, and health itself, sometimes to our hurt; for everything that is pleasing to us is not always good for us. If He send us death or an increase of sickness, instead of a cure, "Virga tua et baculus tuus ipsa me consolata sunt,"[1] He does it by the reasons of His providence, which better and more certainly discerns what is proper for us than we can do; and we ought to take it in good part, as coming from a wise and most friendly hand;

> "Si consilium vis:
> Permittes ipsis expendere numinibus, quid
> Conveniat nobis, rebusque sit utile nostris . . .
> Carior est illis homo quam sibi:"[2]

for to require from them honours, or commands, is to ask them to throw you into a battle, set you upon a cast at dice, or something of the like nature, whereof the issue is to you unknown and the fruit doubtful.

There is no so sharp and violent dispute amongst the philosophers, as about the question of the sovereign good of man; out of which, by the calculation of Varro,[3] there arose two hundred and fourscore and eight sects. "Qui autem de summo bono dissentit, de tota philosophiæ ratione disputat."[4]

> "Tres mihi convivæ prope dissentire videntur,
> Poscentes vario multum diversa palato:
> Quid dem? Quid non dem? Renuis tu, quod jubet alter;
> Quod petis, id sane est invisum acidumque duobus:"[5]

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[1] "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."—*Psalm* xxiii. 4.

[2] "If you will be ruled by me, leave it to the gods to consider what is useful for us and our affairs, for man is dearer to them than he is to himself."—JUVENAL, x. 346.

[3] St. Augustin, De Civit. Dei, xix. 2.

[4] "For whoever enters into controversy concerning the supreme good, disputes upon the whole reason of philosophy."—CICERO, *De Finibus*, v. 5.

[5] "Three guests of mine wholly differ, each man's palate requiring something that the others do not like. What am I to do? What give? What not give? You refuse what the others desire: what you seek the two others say is detestable."—HORACE, *Epist.*, ii. 2, 61.

nature should say the same to their contests and debates. Some say that our wellbeing lies in virtue, others in pleasure, others in our submitting to nature; one in knowledge, another in being exempt from pain; another, in not suffering ourselves to be carried away by appearances: and this fancy seems to have relation to that of the ancient Pythagoras,

> "Nil admirari, prope res est una, Numici,
> Solaque, quæ possit facere et servare beatum;" [1]

which is the point of the Pyrrhonian sect: Aristotle[2] attributes the being amazed at nothing to magnanimity, and Archesilaus said,[3] that constancy and a right and inflexible state of judgment were the true goods, consent and application vices and evils; it is true that in being thus positive and establishing it by certain axiom, he quitted Pyrrhonism; for the Pyrrhonians, when they say that Ataraxy,[4] which is the immobility of the judgment, is the sovereign good, do not design to say it affirmatively; but the same motion of the soul which makes them avoid precipices and take shelter from the evening damp, presents to them this fancy, and makes them refuse another.

How much do I wish, that whilst I live, either some other, or Justus Lipsius, the most learned man now living, of a most polished and judicious understanding, truly resembling my Turnebus, had the will and health and leisure sufficient candidly and carefully as possible to collect into a register, according to their divisions and classes, the opinions of ancient philosophy on the subject of our being and our manners; their controversies, the succession and reputation of the parts, the application of the lives of the authors and their disciples to their own precepts on memorable and exemplary occasions: what a beautiful and useful work that would be!

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[1] "Not to admire is all the art I know,
To make men happy, and to keep them so."
—HORACE, *Epist.*, i. 6, 1.

"Admire," in the sense of not being surprised at anything.

[2] Moral. ad Nicom., iv. 3.

[3] Sextus Empiricus, Pyrrh., Hypot., i. 33.

[4] Perfect tranquillity.

To continue: if it be from ourselves that we are to extract the rules of our manners, upon what a confusion are we thrown? for that which our reason advises us to as the most probable, is generally for every one to obey the laws of his country, as was the advice of Socrates, inspired, he tells us, by a divine counsel; and thence what results but that our duty has no other rule than what is accidental? Truth ought to have a like and universal visage: if man could know equity and justice that had a body and a true being, he would not fetter it to the conditions of this country or that; it would not be from the whimsies of the Persians or Indians that virtue would receive its form. There is nothing more subject to perpetual agitation than the laws: since the time that I was born, I have known those of the English, our neighbours, three or four times changed, not only in matters of civil regimen, which is that wherein constancy may be dispensed with, but in the most important subject that can be, namely, religion: at which I am the more troubled and ashamed, because it is a nation with which those of my province have formerly had so great familiarity and acquaintance, that there yet remain in my house some traces of our ancient kindred. And here with us at home, I have known a thing that was a capital offence become lawful; and we who hold others to it, are likewise, according to the chances of war, in a possibility of being found one day guilty of high treason, both divine and human, should our justice fall into the power of injustice, and, after a few years' possession, taking a quite contrary being. How could that ancient god[1] more clearly accuse the ignorance of human knowledge concerning the Divine being, and give men to understand that their religion was but a thing of their own contrivance, useful to bind their society, than in declaring as he did to those who came to his tripod for instruction, "that every one's true worship was that which he found in use in the place where he chanced to be?" O God, what infinite obligation have we to the benignity of our sovereign Creator, for having disabused our belief from these wandering and arbitrary devotions, and for having seated it upon the eternal founda-

[1] Apollo.

tion of His Holy Word? What will, then, philosophy say to us in this necessity? Why, "that we follow the laws of our country," that is to say, that floating sea of the opinions of a republic or a prince that will paint justice for me in as many colours and reform it as many ways as there are changes of passion in themselves: I cannot suffer my judgment to be so flexible. What kind of goodness is that which I see to-day in repute, and that to-morrow shall be in none, and which the crossing of a river makes a crime? What truth is it that these mountains enclose, and which is a lie in the world beyond them?

But they are pleasant, when to give some certainty to the laws, they say that there are some firm, perpetual and immutable, which they call natural, that are imprinted in mankind by the condition of their own proper being; and of these, some reckon up three, some four, some more, and some less, a sign that it is a mark as doubtful as the rest. Now they are so unfortunate (for what can I call it else but misfortune, that of so infinite a number of laws there should not be found one at least that fortune and the temerity of chance has suffered to be universally received by the consent of all nations?)—they are, I say, so miserably unfortunate, that of these three or four select laws there is not so much as one that is not contradicted and disowned, not only by one nation but by many. Now the only likely sign by which they can argue or infer some laws to be natural, is the universality of approbation; for we should, without doubt, follow by common consent that which nature had really ordained for us; and not only every nation, but every particular man would resent the force and violence that any one should do him, who would impel him to anything contrary to this law. Let them produce me but one of this condition. Protagoras and Aristo gave no other essence to the justice of laws, than the authority and opinion of the legislator; and that, these put aside, the honest and the good would lose their qualities, and remain empty names of indifferent things: Thrasymachus in Plato[1] is of opinion that there is no other law but the convenience of the superior. There is not anything wherein the world is

[1] Republic.

so various as in laws and customs; such a thing is abominable here, which is elsewhere in esteem, as in Lacedæmon dexterity in stealing; marriages within degrees of consanguinity are capitally interdicted amongst us; they are elsewhere in honour:

> "Gentes esse feruntur,
> In quibus et nato genitrix, et nata parenti,
> Jungitur, et pietas geminato crescit amore;"[1]

the murder of infants, the murder of fathers, community of wives, traffic in robberies, licence in all sorts of voluptuousness; in short, there is nothing so extreme that is not allowed by the custom of some nation or other.

It is credible that there are natural laws, as we see in other creatures, but they are lost in us; this fine human reason everywhere so insinuating itself to govern and command, as to shuffle and confound the face of things, according to its own vanity and inconstancy; "Nihil itaque amplius nostrum est; quod nostrum dico, artis est."[2] Subjects have divers aspects and divers considerations; and from this the diversity of opinions principally proceeds; one nation considers a subject in one aspect and stops there; another takes it in another aspect.

There is nothing of greater horror to be imagined than for a man to eat his father; and yet the nations whose custom anciently it was so to do,[3] looked upon it as a testimony of piety and natural affection, seeking thereby to give their progenitors the most worthy and honourable sepulture; storing up in themselves and as it were in their own marrow, the bodies and relics of their fathers; and in some sort vivifying and regenerating them by transmutation into their living flesh, by means of nourishment and digestion: it is easy to consider what a cruelty and abomination it must have appeared to men possessed and imbued with this superstition, to throw their father's remains to the

[1] "'Tis said there are some nations where mothers marry their sons, fathers their daughters, and love is enhanced by the double tie."—OVID, *Met.*, x. 331.

[2] "Therefore nothing is any longer truly ours: what we call ours belongs to art."

[3] Sextus Empiricus, Pyrr. Hypo., iii. 24

corruption of the earth and the nourishment of beasts and worms.

Lycurgus considered in theft, the vivacity, diligence, boldness, and dexterity, of purloining anything from our neighbours, and the utility that redounded to the public that every one should look more narrowly to the conservation of what was his own; and believed that from this double institution of assailing and defending advantage was to be made for military discipline (which was the principal science and virtue to which he would inure that nation) of greater consideration than the disorder and injustice of taking another man's goods.

Dionysius the tyrant offered Plato a robe of the Persian fashion, long, damasked, and perfumed; Plato refused it, saying that, being born a man he would not willingly dress himself in woman's clothes; but Aristippus accepted it, with this answer, that no accoutrement could corrupt a chaste courage.[1] His friends reproaching him with meanness of spirit, for laying it no more to heart that Dionysius had spit in his face; "Fishermen," said he, "suffer themselves to be dashed with the waves of the sea from head to foot to catch a gudgeon."[2] Diogenes was washing cabbages, and seeing him pass by: "If thou couldst live on cabbage," said he, "thou wouldst not fawn upon a tyrant," to whom Aristippus replied; "And if thou knewest how to live amongst men, thou wouldst not be washing cabbages."[3] Thus reason finds appearance for divers effects: 'tis a pot with two ears that a man may take by the right or left:

> "Bellum, o terra hospita, portas:
> Bello armantur equi; bellum hæc armenta minantur.
> Sed tamen idem olim curru succedere sueti
> Quadrupedes, et frena jugo concordia ferre,
> Spes est pacis."[4]

Solon, being importuned by his friends not to shed powerless and unprofitable tears for the death of his son:

[1] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 78. [2] Idem, ibid. 67.
[3] Idem, ibid. 68.
[4] "War, O foreign land, thou bringest us; horses are armed for war, these herds threaten war: and yet these animals having long with patience borne the yoke and yielded to the reins before, there is hope of peace."—*Æneid*, iii. 539.

"It is for that reason that I the more justly shed them," said he, "because they are powerless and unprofitable."[1] Socrates' wife exasperated her grief by this circumstance; "Oh, how unjustly do these wicked judges put him to death!" "Why," replied he, "hadst thou rather they should justly execute me?"[2] We have our ears bored; the Greeks looked upon that as a mark of slavery.[3] We retire in private to enjoy our wives; the Indians do it in public.[4] The Scythians immolated strangers in their temples; elsewhere temples were a refuge.[5]

> "Inde furor vulgi, quod numina vicinorum
> Odit quisque locus, cum solos credat habendos
> Esse deos, quos ipse colit."[6]

I have heard of a judge who, where he met with a sharp conflict betwixt Bartolus and Baldus,[7] and some point discussed with many cöntrarieties, wrote in the margin of his note-book: "A question for a friend," that is to say that truth was there so controverted and confused that in a like cause he might favour which of the parties he thought fit. 'Twas only for want of wit that he did not write, "A question for a friend," throughout; the advocates and judges of our time find bias enough in all causes to accommodate them to what they themselves think fit. In so infinite a science, depending upon the authority of so many opinions, and so arbitrary a subject, it cannot but be that an extreme confusion of judgments must arise. There is hardly any suit so clear wherein opinions do not very much differ; what one court has determined, another determines quite contrary, and itself also contrary at another time. By this licence, which is a marvellous blemish on the ceremonious authority and lustre of our justice, we see frequent examples of persons not abiding by decrees, but running from judge to judge, and court to court, to decide one and the same cause.

[1] Diogenes Laertius, i. 63. [2] Idem, ii. 35.
[3] Sextus Empiricus, iii. 24; Plutarch, Life of Cicero, c. 26.
[4] Idem, i. 14, iii. 24. [5] Idem, ibid.
[6] "Hence the popular fury, that every locality hates its neighbours' gods, and fancies that there are no real gods but their own." —JUVENAL, xv. 371.
[7] Two eminent jurisconsults.

As to the liberty of philosophical opinions concerning vice and virtue, 'tis not necessary to be expatiated upon, as therein are found many opinions that are better concealed than published to weak minds. Arcesilaus said,[1] that in fornication it was no matter how, or with whom it was committed: "Et obscænas voluptates, si natura requirit, non genere, aut loco, aut ordine, sed forma, ætate, figura, metiendas Epicurus putat[2] . . . ne amores quidem sanctos a sapiente alienos esse arbitrantur[3] . . . quæramus, ad quam usque ætatem juvenes amandi sint." These two last stoical quotations, and the reproach that Dicæarchus threw in the teeth of Plato himself upon this account, show how much the soundest philosophy indulges licence and excess, very remote from common usage.

Laws derive their authority from possession and use: 'tis dangerous to trace them back to their beginning; they grow great and ennoble themselves, like our rivers, by running; follow them upward to their source, 'tis but a little spring, scarce discernible, that swells thus and thus fortifies itself by growing old. Do but consult the ancient considerations that gave the first motion to this famous torrent, so full of dignity, awe, and reverence; you will find them so light and weak that it is no wonder if these people, who weigh and reduce everything to reason, and who admit nothing by authority or upon trust, have their judgments very remote and differing from those of the public. It is no wonder if people, who take their pattern from the first image of nature, should, in most of their opinions, swerve from the common path: as, for example, few amongst them would have approved of the strict conditions of our marriages, and most of them have been for having women in common and without obligation: they would refuse our ceremonies. Chrysippus[4] said that a philosopher would

[1] Plutarch, Rules and Measures of Health, c. 5.

[2] "And obscene pleasures, if nature requires, Epicurus thinks are not to be measured, either by kind, place, or order, but by age and beauty. Neither are holy loves thought to be interdicted to the sages—we are to inquire till what age young men are to be loved."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, v. 33; *Idem*, *De Finib.*, iii. 20; SENECA, *Ep.* 123.

[3] Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., iv. 34.

[4] Plutarch, Contradictions of the Stoic Philosophers, c. 31.

make a dozen somersaults and turned up his tail without his breeches for a dozen of olives: this philosopher would hardly have advised Calisthenes to have refused to Hippoclides[1] the fair Agarista, his daughter, for having seen him stand on his head upon a table. Metrocles let wind a little indiscreetly in disputation in the presence of his school, and kept himself hid in his own house for shame, till Crates coming to visit him, and adding to his consolations and reasons the example of his own liberty, falling to let wind with him who should let most, cured him of that scruple, and, withal, drew him to his own Stoical sect, more free than that more reserved one of the Peripatetics, of which he had been till then.[2] That which we call decency, not to dare to do that in public which it is decent enough to do in private, the Stoics call foppery; and to mince it and be so modest as to conceal and disown what nature, custom, and our desires publish and proclaim of our actions, they reputed a vice; but the others thought it was to undervalue the mysteries of Venus, to draw them out of her private temples to expose them to the view of the people: and that to bring them out from behind the curtain was to lose them. Modesty is a thing of weight; secrecy, reserve, circumspection, are parts of esteem: that pleasure does very rightly when, under the visor of virtue, she desires not to be prostituted in the open streets, trodden under foot, and exposed to the public view, wanting the dignity and convenience of her private cabinets. Hence some say that to put down public stews is not only to disperse fornication into all places that was assigned to one, but, moreover, by the very difficulty, to incite idlers to this vice:

> "Mœchus es Aufidiæ, qui vir, Scævine, fuisti;
> Rivalis fuerat qui tuus, ille vir est.
> Cur aliena placet tibi, quæ tua non placet uxor?
> Numquid securus non potes arrigere?"[3]

This experience diversifies itself in a thousand examples:

[1] Herodotus, vi. 129. [2] Diogenes Laertius, vi. 94.

[3] "Thou, Scævinus, once Aufidia's husband, art now her gallant. He who was once your rival is now her husband. How is it that she who now pleases thee, being another's, did not please thee when thou wert her husband? Must your vigour be needs roused by difficulties?"—MARTIAL, iii. 70.

"Nullus in urbe fuit tota, qui tangere vellet
Uxorem gratis, Cæciliane, tuam,
Dum licuit: sed nunc, positis custodibus, ingens
Turba fututorum est. Ingeniosus homo es."[1]

A philosopher[2] being taken in the very act, and asked what he was doing, coolly replied, "I am planting a man;" no more blushing to be so caught than if they had found him planting garlic.

It is, I suppose, out of tenderness and respect to the natural modesty of mankind that a great and religious author[3] is of opinion that this act is so necessarily bound to privacy and shame that he cannot persuade himself there could be any absolute performance in those impudent embraces of the Cynics, but that they only made it their business to represent lascivious gestures to maintain the impudence of their schools' profession; and that to eject what shame had withheld it was afterwards necessary for them to withdraw into the shade. But he had not thoroughly examined their debauches: for Diogenes, playing the beast with himself in public, wished in the presence of all who saw him that he could fill his belly by that exercise.[4] To those who asked him why he did not find out a more commodious place to eat in than the open street, he made answer, "because I am hungry in the open street."[5] The women philosophers who mixed with their sect, mixed also with their persons in all places without reservation; and Hipparchia was not received into Crates' society but upon conditions that she should in all things follow the uses and customs of his rule.[6] These philosophers set a great price upon virtue, and renounced all other discipline but the moral: and yet in all their actions they attributed the sovereign authority to the election of their sage as above the laws, and gave no other curb to voluptuousness but

[1] "Not a man in the whole city, Cæcilianus, would touch your wife gratis, while it was easy to do so: now that you have set guards upon her, there's a whole crowd mad after her. O, you're a clever fellow."—MARTIAL, i. 74.

[2] Diogenes the Cynic.

[3] St. Augustin, De Civit. Dei. xiv. 20.

[4] Diogenes Laertius, vi. 69.

[5] Idem, vii. 58.

[6] Idem, vi. 96.

moderation only, and the conservation of the liberty of others.

Heraclitus and Protagoras,[1] forasmuch as wine seemed bitter to the sick and pleasant to the sound; the rudder crooked in the water and straight when out, and such like contrary appearances as are found in subjects, thence argued that all subjects had in themselves the causes of these appearances; and that there was some bitterness in the wine which had sympathy with the sick man's taste, and the rudder some bending quality, sympathizing with him who looks upon it in the water, and so of all the rest; which is as much as to say that all is in all things, and, consequently, nothing in any one, for where all is, there is nothing.

This opinion put me in mind of the experience we have, that there is no sense nor aspect of anything, whether bitter or sweet, straight or crooked, that human wit does not find out in the writings it undertakes to rummage over. Into the simplest, purest, and most perfect speaking that can possibly be, how many lies and falsities have we suggested? What heresy has not there found ground and testimony sufficient to set forth and defend itself? 'Tis on this account that the authors of such errors will never surrender this proof of the testimony of the interpretation of words. A person of dignity who would prove to me by authority the search of the philosopher's stone wherein he was over head and ears engaged, alleged to me the other day, five or six passages in the Bible upon which he said he first founded his attempt, for the discharge of his conscience (for he is a divine); and in truth the invention was not only amusing, but, moreover, very well accommodated to the defence of this fine science.

By this way the reputation of divining fables is acquired; there is no fortune-teller, if he have but this authority that people will condescend to turn over and curiously peep into all the folds and glosses of his words, but we may make him, like the Sybils, say what we will. There are so many ways of interpretation that it will be hard but that, either obliquely or in a direct line, an ingenious wit will find out in

[1] Sextus Empiricus, i. 29.

every subject some air that will serve for his purpose: therefore 'tis we find a cloudy and ambitious style in so frequent and ancient use. Let the author but contrive to attract and busy posterity about his predictions; which not only his own parts, but as much or more the accidental favour of the matter itself, may effect; that, as to the rest, he express himself foolishly or subtlely, somewhat obscurely and contradictorily, 'tis no matter: a number of wits, shaking and sifting him, will bring out a great many several forms, either according to his own, or collateral, or contrary to it, which will all redound to his honour: he will see himself enriched, by the means of his disciples, like the regents of colleges by their pupils at Landy.[1] This is it which has given reputation to many things of no worth at all; that has brought several writings into vogue, and given them the fame of containing all sorts of matter that can be desired; one and the same thing receiving a thousand and a thousand images and various considerations, even as many as we please.

Is it possible that Homer could design to say all that they make him say, and that he devised so many and so various figures as that divines, lawgivers, captains, philosophers, all sorts of men who treat of sciences, how variously and oppositely soever, should cite him, and support their arguments by his authority, as the sovereign master of all offices, works, and artisans; counsellor-general of all enterprises? whoever has had occasion for oracles and predictions has there found sufficient to serve his turn. 'Tis wonderful how many and how admirable concurrences an intelligent person and a particular friend of mine has there found out in favour of our religion, and he cannot easily be put out of the conceit that this was Homer's design: and yet he is as well acquainted with that author as any man whatever of our time; and so what he has found out there in favour of our religion, many anciently found there in favour of theirs. Do but observe how Plato is tumbled and tossed about: every one ennobling his own opinions by applying him to himself, makes him take what side he pleases; they

[1] A present which the scholars gave their master at the Fair of Landy, held yearly at St. Denis, by institution of King Dagobert in 629.

draw him in and engage him in all the new opinions the world receives, and make him, according to the different course of things, differ from himself; they make him, according to their sense, disavow the manners and customs lawful in his age, because they are unlawful in ours: and all this with vivacity and power, according to the force and sprightliness of the wit of the interpreter. From the same foundation that Heraclitus and this sentence of his had, "that all things have in them those forms that we discern in them," Democritus drew a quite contrary conclusion—namely, "that subjects had nothing at all in them of what we there find;" and, forasmuch as honey is sweet to one and bitter to another, he thence argued that it was neither sweet nor bitter. The Pyrrhonians would say that they know not whether it is sweet or bitter, or neither the one nor the other, or both; for these always gain the highest point of dubitation. The Cyrenaics held that nothing was perceptible from without, and that that only was perceptible which internally touched us, as grief and pleasure; acknowledging neither tone nor colour, but certain affections only that we receive from them, and that man's judgment had no other seat. Protagoras believed that "what seemed to every one was true to every one." The Epicureans lodged all judgment in the senses, both in the knowledge of things and in pleasure. Plato would have the judgment of truth, and truth itself, derived from opinions and the senses, appertain to the mind and cogitation.

This discourse has put me upon the consideration of the senses, in which lie the greatest foundation and proof of our ignorance. Whatsoever is known is doubtless known by the faculty of the knower; for seeing the judgment proceeds from the operation of him who judges, 'tis reason that he perform this operation by his means and will, not by the constraint of another, as would happen if we knew things by the power and according to the law of their essence. Now all knowledge is conveyed to us by the senses; they are our masters:

"Via qua munita fidei
Proxima fert humanum in pectus, templaque mentis:"[1]

[1] "It is the path by which faith finds its way to enter the human heart and the temple of the mind."—LUCRETIUS, v. 103.

science begins by them, and is resolved into them. After all, we should know no more than a stone, if we did not know that there is sound, odour, light, taste, measure, weight, softness, hardness, sharpness, colour, smoothness, breadth, and depth; these are the platform and principles of all the structure of our knowledge, and, according to some, science is nothing else but sensation. He that could make me contradict the senses would have me by the throat, he could not make me go further back; the senses are the beginning and the end of human knowledge:

> "Invenies primis ab sensibus esse creatam
> Notitiam veri; neque sensus posse refelli . . .
> Quid majore fide porro, quam sensus, haberi
> Debet?"[1]

Attribute to them the least we can, we must still of necessity grant them this, that it is by their means and mediation that all our instruction is directed. Cicero says,[2] that Chrysippus, having attempted to depreciate the force and virtue of the senses, presented to himself arguments and so vehement oppositions to the contrary, that he could not satisfy them; whereupon Carneades, who maintained the contrary side, boasted that he would make use of the same words and arguments that Chrysippus had done wherewith to controvert him, and, therefore, thus cried out against him: "O miserable! thy force has destroyed thee."[3] There can, in our estimate, be nothing absurd to a greater degree than to maintain that fire does not warm, that light does not shine, and that there is no weight nor solidity in iron, which are knowledges conveyed to us by the senses; there is no belief or knowledge in man that can be compared to that for certainty.

The first consideration I have upon the subject of the senses is, that I make a doubt whether man is furnished with all natural senses. I see several animals that live an entire and perfect life, some without sight, others without

[1] "You will find that all knowledge of truth is first conveyed to the soul by the senses. The senses cannot be disputed. Upon what can we more safely rely than on them?"—LUCRETIUS, iv. 279, 483.

[2] Acad., ii. 27.

[3] Plutarch, Contradictions of the Stoic Philosophers.

hearing: who knows whether to us also one, two, or three, or many other senses, may not be wanting? For if any one be wanting, our examination cannot discover the defect. 'Tis the privilege of the senses to be the utmost limit of our discovery; there is nothing beyond them that can assist us in exploration, not so much as one sense in the discovery of another:

> "An poterunt oculos aures reprehendere? an aures
> Tactus? an hunc porro tactum sapor arguet oris?
> An confutabunt nares, oculive revincent?"[1]

they all constitute the extremest limits of our ability:

> "Seorsum cuique potestas
> Divisa est, sua vis cuique est."[2]

It is impossible to make a man, naturally blind, conceive that he does not see; impossible to make him desire sight, or to regret his defect: for which reason we ought not to derive any assurance from the soul's being contented and satisfied with those we have, considering that it cannot be sensible herein of its infirmity and imperfection, if there be any such thing. It is impossible to say anything to this blind man, either by argument or similitude, that can possess his imagination with any apprehension of light, colour, or sight; nothing remains behind that can push on the senses to evidence. Those that are born blind, whom we hear to wish they could see, it is not that they understand what they desire: they have learned from us that they want something, that there is something to be desired that we have which they can name indeed, and speak of its effects and consequence; but yet they know not what it is, nor at all apprehend it.

I have seen a gentleman of a good family who was born blind, or at least blind from such an age that he knows not what sight is, who is so little sensible of his defect that he makes use, as we do, of words proper for seeing, and

[1] "Can ears correct the eyes, or eyes the touch, or can touch be checked by tasting; or can nose or eyes confute other faculties?" —LUCRETIUS, iv. 487.

[2] 'Each has its own special power assigned to it, and its strength is its own."—*Idem, ibid.*, 490.

applies them after a manner wholly special and his own. They brought him a child to whom he was godfather; having taken him into his arms: "Good God," said he, "what a fine child is this: how beautiful to look upon, what a pleasant face he has!" He will say, like one of us, "this room has a very fine prospect; it is clear weather; the sun shines bright:" and, moreover, hunting, tennis and butts being our exercises, as he has heard, he has taken a liking to them, makes them his exercises, and believes he has as good a share of the sport as we have; and will express himself as angry or pleased as the best of us all, and yet knows nothing of it but by the ear. One cries out to him, "Here's a hare," when he is upon some even plain where he may safely ride; and afterwards, when they tell him the hare is killed, he will be as proud of it as he hears others say they are. He will take a tennis-ball in his left hand and strike it away with the racket: he will shoot with a musket at random, and is contented with what his people tell him, that he is over or beside the mark.

Who knows whether all human kind commit not the like absurdity, for want of some sense, and that through this default, the greatest part of the face of things is concealed from us? What do we know but that the difficulties which we find in several works of nature do not thence proceed? and that several effects of animals, which exceed our capacity, are not produced by the faculty of some sense that we are defective in? and whether some of them have not by this means a life more full and entire than ours? We seize an apple as it were with all our senses: we there find redness, smoothness, odour, and sweetness: but it may have other virtues beside these, as drying up or binding, to which no sense of ours can have any reference.[1] Is it not likely that there are sentient faculties in nature that are fit to judge and discern what we call the occult properties in several things, as for the loadstone to attract iron; and that the want of such faculties is the cause that we are ignorant of the true essence of such things? 'Tis, peradventure, some particular sense that gives cocks to under-

[1] All this is taken from Sextus Empiricus, Pyrrh. Hypot., i. 14.

stand what hour it is at midnight and when it grows to be towards day, and that makes them crow accordingly; that teaches chickens, before they have any experience of what they are, to fear a sparrow-hawk, and not a goose or a peacock, though birds of a much larger size; that cautions them of the hostile quality the cat has against them, and makes them not fear a dog; to arm themselves against the mewing, a kind of flattering voice, of the one, and not against the barking, a shrill and threatening voice, of the other; that teaches wasps, ants and rats to select the best pear and the best cheese, before they have tasted them, and which inspires the stag, the elephant, the serpent, with the knowledge of a certain herb proper for their cure. There is no sense that has not a mighty dominion, and that does not by its power introduce an infinite number of knowledges. If we were defective in the intelligence of sounds, of harmony, and of the voice, it would cause an unimaginable confusion in all the rest of our science; for, besides what appertains to the proper effect of every sense, how many arguments, consequences, and conclusions do we draw as to other things, by comparing one sense with another? Let an understanding man imagine human nature originally produced without the sense of seeing, and consider what ignorance and trouble such a defect would bring upon him, what a darkness and blindness in the soul; he will see by that of how great importance to the knowledge of truth the privation of such another sense, or of two, or three, should we be so deprived, would be. We have formed a truth by the consultation and concurrence of our five senses; but, peradventure, we should have the consent and contribution of eight or ten, to make certain discovery of it in its essence.

The sects that controvert the knowledge of man, do it principally by the uncertainty and weakness of our senses; for since all knowledge is by their means and mediation conveyed unto us, if they fail in their report, if they corrupt or alter what they bring us from without, if the light which by them creeps into the soul be obscured in the passage, we have nothing else to hold by. From this extreme difficulty all these fancies proceed; "that every subject has in itself all we there find: that it has nothing in it, of what

we think we there find;" and that of the Epicureans, "that the sun is no bigger than 'tis judged by our sight to be:"

> "Quidquid id est, nihilo fertur majore figura,
> Quam, nostris oculis quam cernimus, esse videtur;"[1]

"that the appearances, which represent a body great to him that is near, and less to him that is more remote, are both true:"

> "Nec tamen hic oculos falli concedimus hilum—
> Proinde animi vitium hoc oculis adfingere noli;"[2]

and resolutely, "that there is no deceit in the senses; that we are to lie at their mercy, and seek elsewhere reasons to excuse the difference and contradictions we there find, even to the inventing of lies and other flams (they go that length) rather than accuse the senses." Timagoras vowed that, by pressing or turning his eye, he could never perceive the light of the candle to double, and that the seeming so proceeded from the vice of opinion, and not from the organ. The most absurd of all absurdities, according to the Epicureans, is in denying the force and effect of the senses:

> "Proinde, quod in quoque est his visum tempore, verum est.
> Et, si non poterit ratio dissolvere causam,
> Cur ea, quæ fuerint juxtim quadrata, procul sint
> Visa rotunda; tamen præstat rationis egentem
> Reddere mendose causas utriusque figuræ,
> Quam manibus manifesta suis emittere quoquam,
> Et violare fidem primam, et convellere tota
> Fundamenta, quibus nixatur vita, salusque:
> Non modo enim ratio ruat omnis, vita quoque ipsa
> Concidat extemplo, nisi credere sensibus ausis,
> Præcipitesque locos vitare, et cætera, quæ sint
> In genere hoc fugienda."[3]

This so desperate and unphilosophical advice, expresses

[1] "But be it what it will, in our esteem, it is no bigger than it seems to our eyes."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 380, 387.

[2] "Yet we deny that the eye is deluded; do not then charge it with the soul's fault."—*Idem, ibid.*

[3] "Therefore, whatever has to them at any time seemed true, is true, and if our reason cannot explain why things seem to be square when near, and at a greater distance appear round, 'tis better for him that's at fault in reasoning to give of each figure a

only this, that human knowledge cannot support itself but by reason that it is unreasonable, foolish, and mad; but that it is better that man, to set a greater value upon himself, should make use of this or any other remedy how fantastic soever, than confess his necessary ignorance; a truth so disadvantageous to him. He cannot avoid owning that the senses are the sovereign lords of his knowledge; but they are uncertain and falsifiable in all circumstances; 'tis there that he is to fight it out to the last; and if his just forces fail him, as they do, supply that defect with obstinacy, temerity, and impudence. If what the Epicureans say be true, viz., "that we have no knowledge, if the appearances of the senses be false;" and if that also be true, which the Stoics say, "that the appearances of the senses are so false that they can furnish us with no manner of knowledge," we shall conclude, to the disadvantage of these two great dogmatical sects, that there is no science at all.

As to what concerns the error and uncertainty of the operation of the senses, every one may furnish himself with as many examples as he pleases; so ordinary are the faults and tricks they put upon us. In the echo of a valley, the sound of the trumpet seems to meet us, which comes from some place behind:

> "Exstantesque procul medio de gurgite montes,
> Classibus inter quos liber patet exitus, iidem
> Apparent, et longe divolsi licet, ingens
> Insula conjunctis tamen ex his una videtur . . .
> Et fugere ad puppim colles campique videntur,
> Quos agimus præter navim, velisque volamus . . .
> Denique ubi in medio nobis equus acer obhæsit
> Flumine, et in rapidas amnis conspeximus undas;
> Stantis equi corpus transversum ferre videtur
> Vis, et in adversum flumen contrudere raptim:"[1]

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false cause, than to permit manifest things to go out of his hands, to give the lie to his first belief, and overthrow all the foundations on which life and safety depend; for not alone reason, but life itself will fall together with sudden ruin, unless we dare trust our senses to avoid precipices, and other such like dangers that are to be avoided."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 499.

[1] "And mountains rising up at a distance from the middle of the sea, between which a free passage for ships is open, yet appear, though far separated, one vast island united of the two, . . . and the hills and plains, past which we row or sail, seem to flee away

just as a musket bullet under the forefinger, the middle finger being lapped over it, feels so like two that a man will have much ado to persuade himself there is but one, the senses so vividly representing them as two. For that the senses are very often masters of our reason and constrain it to receive impressions which it judges and knows to be false, is frequently seen. I set aside the sense of feeling, that has its functions nearer, more vivid and substantial, that so often by the effect of the pains it inflicts on the body subverts and overthrows all those fine stoical resolutions, and compels him to cry out from his belly, who has resolutely established this doctrine in his soul, "that the gout and all other pains and diseases are indifferent things, not having the power to abate anything of the sovereign felicity wherein the sage is seated by his virtue;" there is no heart so effeminate that the rattle and sound of our drums and trumpets will not enflame with courage; nor so sullen that the sweetness of music will not rouse and cheer; nor a soul so stubborn that will not feel itself struck with some reverence in considering the sombre vastness of our churches, the variety of ornaments and order of our ceremonies, and in hearing the solemn music of our organs, and the grace and devout harmony of our voices; even those, who come in with contempt, feel a certain shivering in their hearts, and something of dread that makes them begin to doubt their opinion. For my part, I do not find myself strong enough to hear an ode of Horace or Catullus sung by a beautiful young mouth, without emotion; and Zeno[1] had reason to say that the voice is the flower of beauty. Some one once wanted to make me believe that a certain person, whom all we Frenchmen know, had imposed upon me in repeating some verses that he had made; that they were not the same upon the paper that they were in the air, and that my eyes would make a contrary judgment of them to my ears: so great a power has pronunciation to give fashion and value to works that are left to

astern. When a spirited horse sticks fast with us in the middle of a river, and we look down into the stream, the horse seems to be carried by its force in a contrary direction, though he stands still." —LUCRETIUS, iv. 398, 390, 421.

[1] Diogenes Laertius iv. 23.

the efficacy and modulation of the voice. Therefore Philoxenus was not so much to blame who, hearing one give an ill accent to some composition of his, stamped on and broke certain earthen vessels of his, saying: "I break what is thine, because thou spoilest what is mine."[1] To what end did those men, who have with a positive resolution destroyed themselves, turn away their faces that they might not see the blow that was by themselves appointed? and that those, who for their health, desire and command incisions and cauteries, cannot endure the sight of the preparations, instruments, and operations of the surgeons? seeing that the sight is not in any way to participate in the pain? are not these proper examples to verify the authority the senses have over the reason? 'Tis to much purpose that we know these tresses were borrowed from a page or a lacquey; that this red came from Spain, and that white and polish from the ocean; our sight will nevertheless compel us to confess the object more agreeable and more lovely against all reason; for in this there is nothing of its own.

> "Auferimur cultu; gemmis auroque teguntur
> Crimina; pars minima est ipsa puella sui.
> Sæpe, ubi sit quod ames, inter tam multa requiras;
> Decipit hac oculos ægide dives amor."[2]

What a strange power do the poets attribute to the senses, who make Narcissus so desperately in love with his own shadow?

> "Cunctaque miratur, quibus est mirabilis ipse;
> Se cupit imprudens, et, qui probat, ipse probatur;
> Dumque petit, petitur: pariterque accendit, et ardet:"[3]

and Pygmalion's judgment so troubled by the impression

[1] Diogenes Laertius, iv. 36.

[2] "We are gulled by adornments; defects are hidden by jewels and gold; the girl is of herself the smallest part. Often, when amongst so many decorations we seek for her we love, wealthy love deceives our eyes with this mask."—OVID, *De Remedio Amor.*, i. 343.

[3] "He admires all things by which he is admired: silly fellow, he desires himself; the praises which he gives, he claims; he seeks, and is sought; he is inflamed and inflames."—OVID, *Met.*, iii. 424.

of the sight of his ivory statue, that he loves and adores it as if it were a living woman!

> "Oscula dat, reddique putat; sequiturque, tenetque,
> Et credit tactis digitos insidere membris;
> Et metuit, pressos veniat ne livor in artus."[1]

Let a philosopher be put into a cage of small thin-set bars of iron, and hang him on the top of the high tower of Nôtre Dame of Paris; he will see, by manifest reason, that he cannot possibly fall, and yet he will find, unless he have been used to the tiler's trade, that he cannot help but that the excessive height will frighten and astound him; for we have enough to do to assure ourselves in the galleries of our steeples, if they are railed with an open baluster, although they are of stone; and some there are that cannot endure so much as to think of it. Let there be a beam thrown over betwixt these two towers, of breadth sufficient to walk upon, there is no philosophical wisdom so firm that can give us the courage to walk over it, as we should do upon the ground. I have often tried this upon our mountains in these parts, and though I am not one who am much subject to be afraid of such things, yet I was not able to endure to look into that infinite depth without horror and trembling in legs and arms, though I stood above my length from the edge of the precipice, and could not have fallen down unless I had chosen. I also observed that what height soever the precipice were, provided there were some tree or some jutting out of a rock a little to support and divide the sight, it a little eases our fears and gives some assurance, as if they were things by which in falling we might have some help; but that direct precipices we are not able to look upon without being giddy; "ut despici sine vertigine simul oculorum animique non possit;"[2] which is a manifest imposture of the sight. And there-

[1] "He kisses, and believes that he is kissed again, seizes her, embraces her; he thinks her limbs yield to the pressure of his fingers, and fears lest they should become black and blue with his ardour."—OVID, *Met.*, x. 256. The text has *loquiturque*, not *sequiturque*.

[2] "Not to be seen without dizziness of the eyes and mind."—LIVY, xliv. 6.

fore it was, that the fine philosopher[1] put out his own eyes to free the soul from being diverted by them, and that he might philosophise at greater liberty: but by the same rule, he should have stopped up his ears, which Theophrastus says are the most dangerous instruments about us for receiving violent impressions to alter and disturb us; and, in short, should have deprived himself of all his other senses, that is to say, of his life and being; for they have all the power to command our soul and reason. "Fit etiam sæpe specie quadam, sæpe vocum gravitate et cantibus, ut pellantur animi vehementius: sæpe etiam cura et timore."[2] Physicians hold that there are certain complexions that are agitated by some sounds and instruments even to fury. I have seen some who could not hear a bone gnawed under the table without impatience; and there is scarce any man who is not disturbed at the sharp and shrill noise that the file makes in grating upon the iron; and so, to hear chewing near them or to hear any one speak who has any impediment in the throat or nose, will move some people even to anger and hatred. Of what use was that piping prompter of Gracchus, who softened, raised, and moved his master's voice whilst he declaimed at Rome, if the movements and quality of the sound had not the power to move and alter the judgments of the auditory? Truly, there is wonderful reason to keep such a clutter about the firmness of this fine piece that suffers itself to be turned and twined by the motions and accidents of so light a wind!

The same cheat that the senses put upon our understanding, they have in turn put upon them; the soul also sometimes has its revenge; they lie and contend which should most deceive one another. What we see and hear when we are transported with passion, we neither see nor hear as it is:

"Et solem geminum, et duplices se ostendere Thebas:"[3]

[1] Democritus, in Cic. de Finibus, v. 29. But Cicero only spoke of it as of a thing uncertain; and Plutarch says positively that it is a falsehood. See his Discourse of Curiosity, xi.

[2] "For it often falls out that minds are more vehemently struck by some sight, by the loud sound of the voice, or by singing; and ofttimes by grief and fear."—CICERO, *De Divin.*, i. 37.

[3] "The sun seemed two suns, and Thebes a double city."—*Æneid*, iv. 470.

the object that we love appears to us more beautiful than it really is:

> "Multimodis igitur pravas turpesque videmus
> Esse in deliciis, summoque in honore vigere:"[1]

and that we hate, more ugly. To a discontented and afflicted man, the light of the day seems dark and overcast. Our senses are not only corrupted, but very often utterly stupified by the passions of the soul; how many things do we see, that we do not take notice of, if the mind be occupied with other thoughts?

> "In rebus quoque apertis noscere possis,
> Si non advertas animum, proinde esse, quasi omni
> Tempore semotæ fuerint, longeque remotæ;"[2]

it seems as though the soul retires within and amuses the powers of the senses. And so both the inside and the outside of man is full of infirmities and falsehood.

They who have compared our life to a dream were, peradventure, more in the right than they were aware of. When we dream, the soul lives, works, exercises all its faculties, neither more nor less than when awake; but if more gently and obscurely, yet not so much certainly, that the difference should be as great as betwixt night and the meridional brightness of the sun; nay, as betwixt night and shade; there she sleeps, here she slumbers, but whether more or less, 'tis still dark and Cimmerian darkness. We wake sleeping, and sleep waking. I do not see so clearly in my sleep; but as to my being awake, I never find it clear enough and free from clouds: moreover, sleep, when it is profound, sometimes rocks even dreams themselves asleep; but our awaking is never so sprightly that it rightly and thoroughly purges and dissipates those reveries which are waking dreams, and worse than dreams. Our reason and soul receiving those fancies and opinions that come in dreams, and authorising the actions of our dreams, in like manner as they do those of the day, why

[1] "We often see the ugly and the vile held in highest honour and warmest love."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 1152.

[2] "Nay, as to the most distinct objects, you may observe that unless the mind take notice of them, they are no more seen than if they were at the end of the world."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 812.

do we not doubt whether our thought and action is not another sort of dreaming, and our waking a certain kind of sleep?

If the senses be our first judges, it is not our own that we are alone to consult; for in this faculty beasts have as great, or greater, right than we: it is certain that some of them have the sense of hearing more quick than man, others that of seeing, others that of feeling, others that of touch and taste. Democritus said,[1] that the gods and brutes had the sensitive faculties much more perfect than man. Now, betwixt the effects of their senses and ours, the difference is extreme; our spittle cleanses and dries up our wounds; it kills the serpent.

> "Tantaque in his rebus distantia, differitasque est,
> Ut quod aliis cibus est, aliis fuat acre venenum.
> Sæpe etenim serpens, hominis contacta saliva,
> Disperit, ac sese mandendo conficit ipsa."[2]

What quality do we attribute to our spittle, either in respect to ourselves or to the serpent? by which of the two senses shall we prove the true essence that we seek? Pliny says,[3] that there are certain sea-hares in the Indies that are poison to us, and we to them, insomuch that with the least touch we kill them: which shall be truly poison, the man or the fish? which shall we believe, the fish of the man, or the man of the fish? One quality of the air infects a man that does the ox no harm; some other infects the ox, but hurts not the man: which of the two shall in truth and nature be the pestilent quality? To them who have the jaundice all things seem yellow and paler than to us:

> "Lurida præterea fiunt, quæcunque tuentur
> Arquati."[4]

They who are troubled with the disease that the physicians call Hyposphagma, which is a suffusion of blood under the

[1] Plutarch, On the Opinions of the Philosophers, iv. 10.

[2] "And in those things the difference is so great that what is one man's poison is another man's meat; for serpents often, when touched with human spittle, go mad, and bite themselves to death."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 638.

[3] Nat. Hist., xxxii. 1.

[4] "Whatever jaundiced eyes view looks yellow."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 333.

skin, see all things red and bloody. What do we know but that these humours, which thus alter the operations of sight, predominate in beasts and are usual with them? for we see some whose eyes are yellow like our people who have the jaundice, and others of a bloody colour; to these 'tis likely that the colour of objects seems other than to us; which judgment of the two shall be right? for it is not said that the essence of things has a relation to man only; hardness, whiteness, depth, and sharpness have reference to the service and knowledge of animals as well as to us, and nature has equally designed them for their use. When we press down the eye, the body that we look upon we perceive to be longer and more extended; many beasts have their eyes so pressed down: this length therefore is, peradventure, the true form of that body, and not that which our eyes give it in their usual state. If we close the lower part of the eye, things appear double to us:

> "Bina lucernarum florentia lumina flammis
> Et duplices hominum facies et corpora bina."[2]

If our ears be obstructed or the passage stopped with anything, we receive the sound quite otherwise than we usually do;[3] the animals likewise, who have either the ears hairy or but a very little hole instead of an ear, do not, consequently, hear as we do, but another kind of sound. We see at festivals and theatres that painted glass of a certain colour reflecting the light of the flambeaux, and all things in the room appear to us green, yellow, or violet:

> "Et vulgo faciunt id lutea russaque vela,
> Et ferrugina, cum, magnis intenta theatris,
> Per malos vulgata trabesque, trementia fluctant:
> Namque ibi consessum caveai subter, et omnem
> Scaenai speciem, patrum, matrumque, deorumque
> Inficiunt, coguntque suo fluitare colore:"[4]

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[1] Sextus Empiricus, i. 14.

[2] "Two lights in the lamps seem blossoming with flames; and each man appears to have a double body and two heads."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 451.

[3] Sextus Empiricus, i. 14.

[4] "And thus yellow, red, and purple curtains, stretched over the spacious theatre, sustained by poles and pillars, wave about in the air, and whole streams of colours flow from the top, and tinge the scenes, and men, and women, and gods."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 75.

'tis likely that the eyes of animals, which we see to be of divers colours, produce the appearance of bodies to them the same with their eyes.

We should, therefore, to make a right judgment of the operations of the senses, be first agreed with beasts; and secondly, amongst ourselves, which we by no means are, but enter at every turn into dispute, seeing that one man hears, sees, or tastes something otherwise than another does; and contest as much as upon any other thing about the diversity of the images that the senses represent to us. A child, by the ordinary rule of nature, hears, sees, and tastes otherwise than a man of thirty years old, and he than one of threescore; the senses are in some more obscure and dusky, and in others more open and quick. We receive things variously, according as we are and according as they appear to us; now, our perception being so uncertain and controverted, it is no wonder if we are told that we may declare that snow appears white to us, but that to affirm that it is in its own essence really so, is more than we are able to justify: and this foundation being shaken, all the knowledge in the world must of necessity fall to pieces. Then our senses themselves hinder one another: a picture seems raised and embossed to the sight, in the handling it seems flat to the touch:[1] shall we say that musk, which delights the smell and is offensive to the taste, is agreeable or no? there are herbs and unguents proper for one part of the body, that are hurtful to another: honey is pleasant to the taste, but not pleasant to the sight.[2] Those rings which are cut in the form of feathers, and which they call *pennes sans fin*, the eye cannot determine their size, or help being deceived by the imagination that on one side they are not larger, and on the other side become gradually narrower, and this even when you have them round the finger; yet when the touch comes to test them, it finds them of equal size and alike throughout. They who, to assist their lust, were wont in ancient times to make use of magnifying glasses to represent the members they were to employ, larger than they were, and by ocular tumidity to please themselves the more:[3] to which of the two senses did they

[1] Sextus Empiricus, Pyrrh. Hypo., i. 14.
[2] Idem, ibid.
[3] Seneca, Nat. Quæst., i. 16.

give the prize, whether to the sight, that represented the members as large and great as they would desire, or to the touch, which presented them little and contemptible? Are they our senses that supply the subject with these different conditions, and have the subjects themselves nevertheless but one? as we see in the bread we eat, it is nothing but bread, but by being eaten it becomes bones, blood, flesh, hair, and nails:

> "Ut cibus in membra atque artus cum diditur omnes,
> Disperit, atque aliam naturam sufficit ex se;"[1]

the humidity[2] sucked up by the root of a tree, becomes trunk, leaf, and fruit; and the air, being but one, is modulated in a trumpet to a thousand sorts of sounds: are they our senses, I would fain know, that in like manner form these subjects into so many divers qualities, or have they them really such in themselves? and, in the face of this doubt, what can we determine of their true essence? Moreover, since the accidents of disease, delirium, or sleep, make things appear otherwise to us than they do to the healthful, the sane, and those that are awake, is it not likely that our right posture of health and understanding, and our natural humours, have also wherewith to give a being to things that have relation to their own condition, and to accommodate them to themselves, as well as when these humours are disordered; and our health as capable of giving them its aspect, as sickness? Why[3] has not the temperate a certain form of objects relative to it, as well as the intemperate; and why may it not as well stamp it with its own character as the other? He whose mouth is out of taste, says the wine is flat; the healthful man commends its flavour, and the thirsty its briskness. Now, our condition always accommodating things to itself, and transforming them according to itself, we cannot know what things truly are in themselves, seeing that nothing comes to us but what is falsified and altered by the senses. Where the compass, the square, and the rule are crooked, all proportions drawn from them,

[1] "As meats diffused through all the members lose their former nature, and become a new substance."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 703.

[2] Sextus Empiricus, *ubi supra*.

[3] Idem, ibid.

all the buildings erected by those guides, must of necessity be also defective; the uncertainty of our senses renders every thing uncertain that they produce:

> "Denique ut in fabrica, si prava est regula prima,
> Normaque si fallax rectis regionibus exit,
> Et libella aliqua si ex parti claudicat hilum;
> Omnia mendose fieri, atque obstipa necessum est,
> Prava, cubantia, prona, supina, atque absona tecta:
> Jam ruere ut quædam, videantur velle, ruantque
> Prodita judiciis fallacibus omnia primis:
> Sic igitur ratio tibi rerum prava necesse est,
> Falsaque sit, falsis quæcumque à sensibus orta est."[1]

and, after all, who can be fit to judge of, and to determine these differences? As we say, in controversies of religion, that we must have a judge neither inclining to the one side nor to the other, free from all choice and affection, which cannot be among Christians; just so it falls out in this; for if he be old, he cannot judge of the sense of old age, being himself a party in the case: if young, there is the same exception; healthful, sick, asleep, or awake, he is still the same incompetent judge: we must have some one exempt from all these qualities, so that without pre-occupation of judgment, he may judge of these propositions as of things indifferent to him; and, by this rule, we must have a judge that never was.

To judge of the appearances that we receive of subjects, we ought to have a judicatory instrument; to prove this instrument, we must have demonstration; to verify this demonstration, an instrument: and here we are upon the wheel.[2] Seeing the senses cannot determine our dispute, being themselves full of uncertainty, it must be reason that must do it; but no reason can be established but upon the foundation of another reason; and so we run back to all infinity. Our fancy does not apply itself to things that are foreign, but is conceived by the mediation of the senses, and the senses do not comprehend a foreign subject, but only their own passions; so that fancy and appearance are no part of the subject, but only of the passion and sufferance

[1] Lucretius, iv. 514. The sense is given in the preceding passage of the text.

[2] "Nous voyla au rouet," arguing in a circle.

of the sense; which passion and subject are several things; wherefore, whoever judges by appearances, judges by another thing than the subject. And to say that the passions of the senses convey to the soul the quality of external subjects by resemblance: how can the soul and understanding be assured of this resemblance, having of itself no communication with the external subjects? as they who never knew Socrates, cannot, when they see his portrait, say it is like him. Now, whoever would, notwithstanding, judge by appearances; if it be by all, it is impossible, because they hinder one another by their contrarieties and discrepancies, as we by experience see: shall some select appearances govern the rest? you must verify these select by another select, the second by the third, and, consequently, there will never be any end on't. Finally, there is no constant existence, either of the objects' being nor of our own; both we and our judgment, and all mortal things, are evermore incessantly running and rolling, and, consequently, nothing certain can be established from the one to the other, both the judging and the judge being in a continual motion and mutation.

We have no communication with Being, by reason that all human nature is ever in the midst, betwixt being born and dying, giving but an obscure appearance and shadow, a weak and uncertain opinion, of itself, and if, peradventure, you fix your thought to apprehend your being, it would be but like grasping water; for the more you clutch your hand to squeeze and hold what is in its own nature flowing, so much the more you lose what you would grasp and hold. So, seeing that all things are subject to pass from one change to another, reason, that there looks for a real substance, finds itself deceived, not being able to apprehend anything that is subsistent and permanent, because that everything is either entering into being, and is not yet wholly arrived at it, or begins to die before it is born. Plato said,[1] that bodies had never any existence, not even birth; conceiving that Homer had made the ocean and Thetis, father and mother of the gods, to show us that all things are in a perpetual fluctuation, motion, and variation: the opinion

[1] In the Theætetes.

of all the philosophers, as he says, before his time, Parmenides only excepted, who would not allow things to have motion, on the power whereof he sets a mighty value. Pythagoras was of opinion, that all matter was flowing and unstable: the Stoics, that there is no time present, and that what we call Present is nothing but the juncture and meeting of the future and the past: Heraclitus,[1] that never any man entered twice into the same river: Epicharmus, that he who borrowed money but an hour ago, does not owe it now; and that he who was invited overnight to come the next day to dinner, comes nevertheless uninvited, considering that they are no more the same men, but are become others; and, "that there could not be found a mortal substance twice in the same condition: for, by the suddenness and quickness of change, it one while dispenses and another reassembles; it comes and goes, after such a manner, that what begins to be born never arrives to the perfection of being, forasmuch as that birth is never finished and never stays as being at an end, but, from the seed, is evermore changing and shifting from one to another: as from human seed is first made in the mother's womb a formless embryo, then a formed child, then, in due course, delivered thence a sucking infant: afterwards it becomes a boy, then a lad, then a man, then a middle-aged man, and at last a decrepid old man; so that age and subsequent generation are always destroying and spoiling that which went before."

> "Mutat enim mundi naturam totius ætas,
> Ex alioque alius status excipere omnia debet;
> Nec manet illa sui similis res; omnia migrant,
> Omnia commutat natura, et vertere cogit."[2]

"And yet we foolishly fear one kind of death, whereas we have already passed and daily pass so many others: for not only, as Heraclitus said, the death of fire is the generation of air, and the death of air the generation of water: but we may still more manifestly discern it in ourselves; the flower

[1] Seneca, Ep., 58.

[2] "Time changes the nature of the whole world, and one state gives all things a new state: nothing remains like itself, but all things range; nature changes everything."—LUCRETIUS, v. 826.

of youth dies and passes away when age comes on, and youth is terminated in the flower of age of a full-grown man, infancy in youth, and the first age dies in infancy; yesterday died in to-day, and to-day will die in to-morrow, and there is nothing that remains in the same state, or that is always the same thing; and that it is so let this be the proof; if we are always one and the same, how comes it then to pass, that we are now pleased with one thing, and by and by with another? how comes it to pass that we love or hate contrary things, that we praise or condemn them? how comes it to pass that we have different affections, and no more retain the same sentiment in the same thought? For it is not likely that without mutation we should assume other passions; and that which suffers mutation does not remain the same, and if it be not the same, it is not at all: but the same that the being is, does, like it, unknowingly change and alter, becoming evermore another from another thing: and, consequently, the natural senses abuse and deceive themselves, taking that which seems, for that which is, for want of well knowing what that which is, is. But what is it then that truly is eternal; that is to say that never had beginning nor never shall have ending, and to which time can bring no mutation: for time is a mobile thing, and that appears as in a shadow, with a matter evermore flowing and running, without ever remaining stable and permanent: and to which those words appertain, Before, and After, Has been, or Shall be: which, at first sight, evidently show that it is not a thing that is; and it were a great folly, and an apparent falsity, to say that that is, which is not yet in being, or that has already ceased to be; and as to these words, Present, Instant, and Now, by which it seems that we principally support and found the intelligence of time, reason discovering, presently destroys it; for it immediately divides and splits it into the future and past, as, of necessity, considering it divided in two. The same happens to nature which is measured, as to time that measures it: for she has nothing more subsisting and permanent than the other, but all things are therein either born, or being born, or dying. So that it were a sinful saying to say of God, who is He who only IS, that HE WAS or that HE SHALL BE: for those are terms of declension,

passages and vicissitude of what cannot continue nor remain in being: wherefore we are to conclude that God only IS, not according to any measure of time, but according to an immutable and motionless eternity, not measured by time, nor subject to any declension; before whom nothing was, and after whom nothing shall be, either more new or more recent, but a real BEING, that with one sole NOW fills the FOR EVER, and there is nothing that truly is, but HE alone, without one being able to say, HE HAS BEEN, or SHALL BE, without beginning, and without end."[1]

To this so religious conclusion of a pagan, I shall only add this testimony of one of the same condition, for the close of this long and tedious discourse, which would furnish me with endless matter. "Oh, what a vile and abject thing," says he,[2] "is man, if he do not raise himself above humanity?" 'Tis a good word, and a profitable desire, but withal absurd; for to make the handful bigger than the hand, and the armful larger than the arm, and to hope to stride further than our legs can reach, is impossible and monstrous; or that man should rise above himself and humanity: for he cannot see but with his eyes, nor seize but with his power. He shall rise if God will extraordinarily lend him His hand; he shall rise, by abandoning and renouncing his own proper means, and by suffering himself to be raised and elevated by means purely celestial. It belongs to our Christian faith, and not to his stoical virtue, to pretend to that divine and miraculous metamorphosis.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF JUDGING OF THE DEATH OF ANOTHER.

WHEN we judge of another's assurance in death, which, without doubt, is the most remarkable action of human

[1] The whole of the passage between commas is copied word for word from Plutarch on the word Ei, c. 12.
[2] Seneca, Nat. Quæs., 1 Præf.

life, we are to take heed of one thing, which is that men very hardly believe themselves to have arrived to that period. Few men come to die in the opinion that it is their latest hour; and there is nothing wherein the flattery of hope more deludes us; it never ceases to whisper in our ears, "others have been much sicker without dying; your condition is not so desperate as 'tis thought; and, at the worst, God has done other miracles." Which happens by reason that we set too much value upon ourselves; it seems as if the universality of things were in some measure to suffer by our dissolution, and that it commiserates our condition, forasmuch as our disturbed sight represents things to itself erroneously, and that we are of opinion they stand in as much need of us as we do of them, like people at sea, to whom mountains, fields, cities, heaven and earth are tossed at the same rate as they are:

"Provehimur portu, terræque urbesque recedunt:"[1]

Whoever saw old age that did not applaud the past and condemn the present time, laying the fault of his misery and discontent upon the world and the manners of men?

"Jamque caput quassans, grandis suspirat arator . . .
Et cum tempora temporibus præsentia confert
Præteritis, laudat fortunas sæpe parentis,
Et crepat antiquum genus ut pietate repletum."[2]

We will make all things go along with us; whence it follows that we consider our death as a very great thing, and that does not so easily pass, nor without the solemn consultation of the stars: "tot circa unum caput tumultuantes deos,"[3] and so much the more think it, as we more value ourselves. "What, shall so much knowledge be lost, with so much damage to the world, without a particular concern of the destinies? Does so rare and exemplary a

[1] "We sail out of port, and cities and lands recede."—*Æneid*, iii. 72.

[2] "Now the old ploughman sighs and shakes his head, and compares present times with those that are past; he lauds his predecessors' happiness, and talks of the great piety of the old race."—LUCRETIUS, ii. 1165.

[3] "All the gods in agitation about one man."—SENECA, *Suasor.* i. 4.

soul cost no more the killing than one that is common and of no use to the public? This life, that protects so many others, upon which so many other lives depend, that employs so vast a number of men in his service, that fills so many places, shall it drop off like one that hangs but by its own simple thread?" None of us lays it enough to heart, that he is but one: thence proceeded those words of Cæsar to his pilot, more tumid than the sea that threatened him:

> "Italiam si cœlo auctore recusas,
> Me pete: sola tibi causa hæc est justa timoris,
> Vectorem non nosce tuum; perrumpe procellas,
> Tutela secure mei."[1]

And these,

> "Credit jam digna pericula Cæsar
> Fatis esse suis; tantusque evertere, dixit
> Me superis labor est, parva quem puppe sedentem,
> Tam magno petiere mari;"[2]

and that idle fancy of the public, that the sun bore on his face mourning for his death a whole year:

> "Ille etiam extincto miseratus Cæsare Romam,
> Cum caput obscura nitidum ferrugine texit:"[3]

and a thousand of the like, wherewith the world suffers itself to be so easily imposed upon, believing that our interests affect the heavens, and that their infinity is concerned at our ordinary actions. "Non tanta cælo societas nobiscum est, ut nostro fato mortalis sit ille quoque siderum fulgor."[4]

Now, to judge of constancy and resolution in a man who

[1] "If you decline to sail to Italy under the gods' protection, trust to mine; the only just cause that you have to fear is, that you do not know your passenger; sail on, secure in my guardianship."—LUCAN, v. 579.

[2] "Cæsar now deemed these dangers worthy of his destiny; 'What!' said he, 'is it for the gods so great a task to overthrow me, that they must be fain to assail me with great seas in a poor little bark.'"—LUCAN, v. 653.

[3] "Cæsar being dead, the sun, in mourning clouds, pitying Rome, clothed himself."—VIRGIL, *Georg.*, i. 466.

[4] "There is no such alliance betwixt us and heaven, than the brightness of the stars should be made mortal by our death."—PLINY, *Nat. Hist.*, ii. 8.

does not yet believe himself to be certainly in danger, though he really is, is not reason; and 'tis not enough that he die in this posture, unless he purposely put himself into it for this effect. It commonly falls out in most men that they set a good face upon the matter and speak with great indifference, to acquire reputation, which they hope afterwards, living, to enjoy. Of all whom I have seen die, fortune has disposed their countenances and no design of theirs; and even of those who in ancient times have made away with themselves, there is much to be considered whether it were a sudden or a lingering death. That cruel Roman emperor would say of his prisoners, that he would make them feel death, and if any one killed himself in prison, "that fellow has made an escape from me;" he would spin out death and make it felt by torments.

> "Vidimus et toto quamvis in corpore cæso
> Nil animæ lethale datum, moremque nefandæ
> Durum sævitiæ, pereuntis parcere morti." [1]

In plain truth, it is no such great matter for a man in health and in a temperate state of mind, to resolve to kill himself; it is very easy to brag before one comes to the push, insomuch that Heliogabalus, the most effeminate man in the world, amongst his lowest sensualities, could forecast to make himself die delicately, when he should be forced thereto; and that his death might not give the lie to the rest of his life, had purposely built a sumptuous tower, the front and base of which were covered with planks enriched with gold and precious stones, thence to precipitate himself; and also caused cords twisted with gold and crimson silk to be made, wherewith to strangle himself; and a sword with the blade of gold to be hammered out to fall upon: and kept poison in vessels of emerald and topaz wherewith to poison himself, according as he should like to choose one of these ways of dying:

> "Impiger . . . et fortis virtute coacta." [2]

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[1] "We have seen in tortured bodies, amongst the wounds, none that have been mortal, inhuman mode of dire cruelty, that means to kill, but will not let men die."—LUCAN, iv. i. 78.

[2] "Resolute and brave by a forced valour."—*Idem*, iv. 798.

Yet in respect of this person, the effeminacy of his preparations makes it more likely that he would have thought better on't, had he been put to the test. But in those who with greater resolution have determined to despatch themselves, we must examine whether it were with one blow which took away the leisure of feeling the effect: for it is to be questioned, whether perceiving life, by little and little, to steal away, the sentiment of the body mixing itself with that of the soul, and the means of repenting being offered, whether, I say, constancy and obstinacy in so dangerous an intention would have been found.

In the civil wars of Cæsar, Lucius Domitius, being taken in the Abruzzi,[1] and thereupon poisoning himself, afterwards repented. It has happened in our time, that a certain person being resolved to die and not having gone deep enough at the first thrust, the sensibility of the flesh opposing his arm, gave himself two or three wounds more, but could never prevail upon himself to thrust home. Whilst Plautius Silvanus was upon his trial, Urgulania, his grandmother, sent him a poniard with which, not being able to kill himself, he made his servants cut his veins.[2] Albucilla in Tiberius' time having, to kill himself, struck with too much tenderness, gave his adversaries opportunity to imprison and put him to death their own way.[3] And that great leader, Demosthenes, after his rout in Sicily, did the same;[4] and C. Fimbria, having struck himself too weakly, entreated his servant to despatch him. On the contrary, Ostorius, who could not make use of his own arm, disdained to employ that of his servant to any other use but only to hold the poniard straight and firm; and running his breast full drive against it, thrust himself through.[5] 'Tis, in truth, a morsel that is to be swallowed without chewing, unless a man be thoroughly resolved; and yet Adrian the Emperor caused his physician to mark and encircle on his pap the mortal place where the man who had received orders to that effect was to stab him. For this reason it was that Cæsar being asked what death he thought to be the most desired, made answer,

[1] La Brusse, which Cotton, or more probably his printer, translates Prussia.
[2] Tacitus, Annals, iv. 22.
[3] Idem, ibid., vi. 48.
[4] Plutarch, Life of Nicias, c. 10.
[5] Tacitus, Annals, xvi. 15.

"The least premeditated, and the shortest."[1] If Cæsar dared to say it, it is no cowardice in me to believe it. "A short death," says Pliny,[2] "is the sovereign good hap of human life." People do not much care to recognize it. No one can say that he is resolute for death who fears to deal with it and cannot undergo it with his eyes open: they whom we see in criminal punishments run to their death and hasten and press their execution, do it not out of resolution, but because they will not give themselves leisure to consider it; it does not trouble them to be dead, but to die:

"Emori nolo, sed me esse mortuum, nihili æstimo:"[3]

'tis a degree of constancy to which I have experimented, that I can arrive, like those who plunge into dangers, as into the sea, with their eyes shut.

There is nothing, in my opinion, more illustrious in the life of Socrates, than that he had thirty whole days wherein to ruminate upon the sentence of his death, to have digested it all that time with a most assured hope, without care, and without alteration, and with a series of words and actions rather careless and indifferent, than any way stirred or discomposed by the weight of such a thought.

That Pomponius Atticus, to whom Cicero writes so often, being sick, caused Agrippa his son-in-law and two or three more of his friends, to be called to him, and told them, that having found all means practised upon him for his recovery to be in vain, and that all he did to prolong his life, also prolonged and augmented his pain, he was resolved to put an end both to the one and the other, desiring them to approve of his determination, or, at least, not to lose their labour in endeavouring to dissuade him. Now, having chosen to destroy himself by abstinence, his disease was thereby cured: the remedy, that he had made use of to kill himself, restored him to health. His physicians and friends, rejoicing at so happy an event, and coming to congratulate him, found themselves very much deceived, it being impossible for them to make him alter his purpose, he telling them, that as he must one day die, and was now so far on

[1] Suetonius, in vita, c. 87. [2] Nat. Hist., vii. 53.

[3] "I have no mind to die, but I have no objection to be dead."—EPICHARMUS, apud CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, i. 8.

his way, he would save himself the labour of beginning another time.[1] This man, having surveyed death at leisure, was not only not discouraged at its approach, but eagerly sought it; for being content that he had engaged in the combat, he made it a point of bravery to see the end; 'tis far beyond not fearing death to taste and relish it.

The story of the philosopher Cleanthes is very like this: he had his gums swollen and rotten; his physicians advised him to great abstinence: having fasted two days, he was so much better that they pronounced him cured, and permitted him to return to his ordinary course of diet: he, on the contrary, already tasting some sweetness in this faintness of his, would not be persuaded to go back, but resolved to proceed, and to finish what he had so far advanced.[2]

Tullius Marcellinus, a young man of Rome, having a mind to anticipate the hour of his destiny, to be rid of a disease that was more trouble to him than he was willing to endure, though his physicians assured him of a certain, though not sudden, cure, called a council of his friends to deliberate about it; of whom, some, says Seneca, gave him the counsel that out of unmanliness they would have taken themselves; others, out of flattery, such as they thought he would best like: but a Stoic said this to him: "Do not concern thyself, Marcellinus, as if thou didst deliberate of a thing of importance; 'tis no great matter to live; thy servants and beasts live; but it is a great thing to die handsomely, wisely, and firmly. Do but think how long thou hast done the same things, eat, drink, and sleep, drink, sleep, and eat: we incessantly wheel in the same circle. Not only ill and insupportable accidents, but even the satiety of living, inclines a man to desire to die." Marcellinus did not stand in need of a man to advise, but of a man to assist him; his servants were afraid to meddle in the business; but this philosopher gave them to understand that domestics are suspected, even when it is in doubt whether the death of the master were voluntary or no; otherwise, that it would be of as ill example to hinder him, as to kill him, forasmuch as

[1] Nepos, Life of Atticus, c. 22.
[2] Diogenes Laertius, viii. 176.

"Invitum qui servat, idem facit occidenti."

He then told Marcellinus, that it would not be unbecoming, as what is left on the tables when we have eaten, is given to the attendants, so, life being ended, to distribute something to those who have been our servants: Now Marcellinus was of a free and liberal spirit; he, therefore, divided a certain sum of money amongst his servants, and consoled them. As to the rest, he had no need of steel nor of blood: he resolved to go out of this life and not to run out of it; not to escape from death, but to essay it. And to give himself leisure to deal with it, having forsaken all manner of nourishment, the third day following, after having caused himself to be sprinkled with warm water, he fainted by degrees, and not without some kind of pleasure, as he himself declared.[2]

In fact, such as have been acquainted with these faintings, proceeding from weakness, say that they are therein sensible of no manner of pain, but, rather, feel a kind of delight, as in the passage to sleep and rest. These are studied and digested deaths.

But to the end that Cato only may furnish out the whole example of virtue, it seems as if his good destiny had put his ill one into the hand with which he gave himself the blow, seeing he had the leisure to confront and struggle with death, reinforcing his courage in the danger, instead of letting it go less. And if I had had to represent him in his supreme station, I should have done it in the posture of tearing out his bloody bowels, rather than with his sword in his hand, as did the statuaries of his time, for this second murder was much more furious than the first.

[1] "He who makes a man live against his will, 'tis as cruel as to kill him."—HORAT., *De Arte Poet.*, 467.

[2] Seneca, Ep., 77.

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CHAPTER XIV.

THAT THE MIND HINDERS ITSELF.

'Tis a pleasant imagination to fancy a mind exactly balanced betwixt two equal desires: for, doubtless, it can never pitch upon either, forasmuch as the choice and application would manifest an inequality of esteem; and were we set betwixt the bottle and the ham, with an equal appetite to drink and eat, there would doubtless be no remedy but we must die of thirst and hunger. To provide against this inconvenience, the Stoics,[1] when they are asked whence the election in the soul of two indifferent things proceeds, and that makes us, out of a great number of crowns, rather take one than another, they being all alike, and there being no reason to incline us to such a preference, make answer, that this movement of the soul is extraordinary and irregular, entering into us by a foreign, accidental, and fortuitous impulse. It might rather, methinks, be said, that nothing presents itself to us wherein there is not some difference, how little soever; and that, either by the sight or touch, there is always some choice, that, though it be imperceptibly, tempts and attracts us; so, whoever shall presuppose a packthread equally strong throughout, it is utterly impossible it should break; for, where will you have the breaking to begin? and that it should break altogether is not in nature. Whoever, also, should hereunto join the geometrical propositions that, by the certainty of their demonstrations, conclude the contained to be greater than the containing, the centre to be as great as its circumference, and that find out two lines incessantly approaching each other, which yet can never meet, and the philosopher's stone, and the quadrature of the circle, where the reason and the effect are so opposite, might, peradventure, find some argument to second this bold saying of Pliny, "Solum certum nihil esse certi, et homine nihil miserius aut superbius."[2]

[1] Plutarch, Contradictions of the Stoic Philosophers.

[2] "It is only certain that there is nothing certain, and that nothing is more miserable or more proud than man."—*Nat. Hist.*, ii. 7.

CHAPTER XV.

THAT OUR DESIRES ARE AUGMENTED BY DIFFICULTY.

THERE is no reason that has not its contrary, say the wisest of the philosophers. I was just now ruminating on the excellent saying one of the ancients alleges for the contempt of life: "No good can bring pleasure, unless it be that for the loss of which we are beforehand prepared;" "In æquo est dolor amissæ rei, et timor amittendæ"[1] meaning by this that the fruition of life cannot be truly pleasant to us, if we are in fear of losing it. It might, however, be said, on the contrary, that we hug and embrace this good so much the more earnestly, and with so much greater affection, by how much we see it the less assured and fear to have it taken from us: for it is evident, as fire burns with greater fury when cold comes to mix with it, that our will is more obstinate by being opposed:

> "Si nunquam Danaen habuisset ahenea turris,
> Non esset Danae de Jove facta parens;"[2]

and that there is nothing naturally so contrary to our taste as satiety which proceeds from facility; nor anything that so much whets it, as rarity and difficulty: "Omnium rerum voluptas ipso, quo debet fugare, periculo crescit."[3]

> "Galla, nega; satiatur amor, nisi gaudia torquent."[4]

To keep love in breath, Lycurgus[5] made a decree that the married people of Lacedæmon should never enjoy one another but by stealth; and that it should be as great a

[1] "The grief of losing a thing, and the fear of losing it, are equal."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 98.

[2] "If Danae had not had a brazen tower, Danae had never been made a mother by Jove."—OVID, *Amor.*, ii. 19, 27.

[3] "The pleasure of all things increases by the same danger that should deter it."—SENECA, *De Benef.*, vii. 9.

[4] "Galla, refuse me; love is glutted with joys that are not attended with trouble."—MARTIAL, iv. 37.

[5] Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus.

shame to take them in bed together as committing with others. The difficulty of assignations, the danger of surprise, the shame of the morning,

> "Et languor, et silentium, . . .
> Et latere petitus imo spiritus:" [1]

these are what give the hautgout to the sauce. How many very wantonly pleasant sports spring from the most decent and modest language of the works on love? Pleasure itself seeks to be heightened with pain; it is much sweeter when it smarts and has the skin rippled. The courtesan Flora said she never lay with Pompey, but that she made him wear the prints of her teeth.[2]

> "Quod petiere, premunt arcte, faciuntque dolorem
> Corporis, et dentes inlidunt sæpe labellis . . .
> Et stimuli subsunt, qui instigant lædere ad ipsum,
> Quodcunque est, rabies unde illæ germina surgunt." [3]

And so it is in everything: difficulty gives all things their estimation; the people of Ancona, in the Marches [4] more readily make their vows to St. James,[5] and those of Galicia to Our Lady of Loretto; they make wonderful to-do at Liége about the baths of Lucca, and in Tuscany about those of Aspa:[6] there are few Romans seen in the fencing school of Rome, which is full of French. The great Cato also, as much as any of us, nauseated his wife whilst she was his, and longed for her when in the possession of another. I was fain to turn out into the paddock an old stallion, as he was not to be governed when he smelt a mare: the facility presently sated him as towards his own, but towards strange mares, and the first that passed by the pale of his pasture, he would again fall to his importunate neighings and his furious heats as before. Our appetite contemns and passes by what it has in possession, to run after that it has not:

[1] "And languor, and silence, and sighs; coming from the innermost heart."—HOR., *Epod.*, xi. 9.

[2] Plutarch, Life of Pompey, c. 1.

[3] "What they have sought they press with such close ardour as to give pain; on the lips fix the teeth, and every kiss indents: urged by latent stimulus the part to wound."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 1079.

[4] Notre Dame de Lorette is a church at Ancona, Italy.

[5] Of Compostella in Galicia.

[6] Spa.

"Transvolat in medio posita, et fugientia captat."[1]

To forbid us anything is to make us have a mind to't:

"Nisi tu servare puellam
Incipis, incipiet desinere esse mea:"[2]

to give it wholly up to us is to beget in us contempt. Want and abundance fall into the same inconvenience:

"Tibi quod superest, mihi quod desit, dolet."[3]

Desire and fruition equally afflict us. The rigors of mistresses are troublesome, but facility, to say truth, still more so; forasmuch as discontent and anger spring from the esteem we have of the thing desired, heat and actuate love, but satiety begets disgust; 'tis a blunt, dull, stupid, tired, and slothful passion.

"Si qua volet regnare diu, contemnat amantem."[4]

"Contemnite, amantes:
Sic hodie veniet, si qua negavit heri."[5]

Why did Poppea invent the use of a mask to hide the beauties of her face, but to enhance it to her lovers?[6] Why have they veiled, even below the heels, those beauties that every one desires to show, and that every one desires to see? Why do they cover with so many hindrances, one over another, the parts where our desires and their own have their principal seat? And to what serve those great bastion farthingales, with which our ladies fortify their haunches, but to allure our appetite, and to draw us on by removing them farther from us?

[1] "He slights her who is close at hand, and runs after her who flees from him."—HORACE, *Sat.*, i. 2, 108.

[2] "If you do not guard your mistress, she will soon begin to be no longer mine."—OVID, *Amor.*, ii. 19, 47.

[3] "Your superfluities trouble you, and what I want troubles me."—TERENCE, *Phorm.*, i. 3, 9.

[4] "She who would long retain her power must use her lover ill."—OVID, *Amor.*, ii. 19, 33.

[5] "If lovers should affect to slight their mistresses, she that yesterday said nay will to-day come and offer herself."—PROPERTIUS, ii. 14, 19.

[6] Tacitus, Annal., xiii. 45.

"Et fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri."[1]
"Interdum tunica duxit operta moram."[2]

To what use serves the artifice of this virgin modesty, this grave coldness, this severe countenance, this professing to be ignorant of things that they know better than we who instruct them in them, but to increase in us the desire to overcome, control, and trample under foot at pleasure, all this ceremony and all these obstacles? For there is not only pleasure, but, moreover, glory, in conquering and debauching that soft sweetness and that childish modesty, and to reduce a cold and matron-like gravity to the mercy of our ardent desires: 'tis a glory, say they, to triumph over modesty, chastity, and temperance; and whoever dissuades ladies from those qualities, betrays both them and himself. We are to believe that their hearts tremble with affright, that the very sound of our words offends the purity of their ears, that they hate us for talking so, and only yield to our importunity by a compulsive force. Beauty, all powerful as it is, has not wherewithal to make itself relished without the mediation of these little arts. Look into Italy, where there is the most and the finest beauty to be sold, how it is, nevertheless, necessitated to have recourse to extrinsic means and other artifices to render itself charming, and yet, in truth, whatever it may do, being venal and public, it remains feeble and languishing: even as in virtue itself, of two like effects, we notwithstanding, look upon that as the fairest and most worthy, wherein the most trouble and hazard are set before us.

'Tis an effect of the divine Providence to suffer the holy Church to be afflicted, as we see it, with so many storms and troubles, by this opposition to rouse pious souls, and to awaken them from that drowsy lethargy wherein, by so long tranquillity, they had been immerged. If we should lay the loss we have sustained in the number of those who have gone astray, in the balance against the benefit we have had by being again put in breath, and by having our zeal and strength revived by reason of this opposition, I

[1] "She flies to the osiers, but first takes care to be seen going there."—VIRGIL, *Eclog.*, iii. 65.
[2] "The hidden robe sometimes checks love."—PROPERTIUS, ii. 15, 6.

know not whether the utility would not surmount the damage.

We have thought to tie the nuptial knot of our marriages more fast and firm by having taken away all means of dissolving it; but the knot of the will and affection is so much the more slackened and made loose, by how much that of constraint is drawn closer; and, on the contrary, that which kept the marriages at Rome so long in honour and inviolate, was the liberty every one who so desired had to break them; they kept their wives the better, because they might part with them if they would; and, in the full liberty of divorce, five hundred years and more passed away before any one made use on't.[1]

"Quod licet, ingratum est; quod non licet, acrius urit."[2]

We might here introduce the opinion of an ancient upon this occasion, "that executions rather whet than dull the edge of vices: that they do not beget the care of doing well, that being the work of reason and discipline, but only a care not to be taken in doing ill:"

"Latius excisæ pestis contagia serpunt."[3]

I do not know that this is true; but I experimentally know, that never civil government was by that means reformed; the order and regimen of manners depend upon some other expedient.

The Greek histories[4] make mention of the Argippians, neighbours to Scythia, who live without either rod or stick for offence; where not only no one attempts to attack them, but whoever can fly thither is safe, by reason of their virtue and sanctity of life, and no one is so bold as to lay hands upon them; and they have applications made to them to determine the controversies that arise betwixt men

[1] "Il se passa cinq cent ans et plus, avant que nul s'en servist," which Cotton renders, "They lived fifty years and more," etc., and Coste follows him. The reference is to Valerius Maximus, ii. 1. 4.

[2] "What you may, is displeasing; what is forbidden, whets the appetite."—OVID, *Amor.*, ii. 19, 3.

[3] "The plague-sore being lanced, the infection spreads all the more.—RUTILIUS, *Itinerar.*, i. 397.

[4] Herodotus, iv. 23.

of other countries. There is a certain nation, where the enclosures of gardens and fields they would preserve, are made only of a string of cotton; and, so fenced, is more firm and secure than by our hedges and ditches. "Furem signata sollicitant . . . aperta effractarius præterit." [1]

Peradventure, the facility of entering my house, amongst other things, has been a means to preserve it from the violence of our civil wars: defence allures attempt, and defiance provokes an enemy. I enervated the soldiers' design by depriving the exploit of danger and all manner of military glory, which is wont to serve them for pretence and excuse: whatever is bravely, is ever honourably, done, at a time when justice is dead. I render them the conquest of my house cowardly and base; it is never shut to any one that knocks; my gate has no other guard than a porter, and he of ancient custom and ceremony, who does not so much serve to defend it as to offer it with more decorum and grace; I have no other guard nor sentinel than the stars. A gentleman would play the fool to make a show of defence, if he be not really in a condition to defend himself. He, who lies open on one side, is everywhere so; our ancestors did not think of building frontier garrisons. The means of assaulting, I mean without battery or army, and of surprising our houses, increases every day more and more beyond the means to guard them; men's wits are generally bent that way; in invasion every one is concerned: none but the rich in defence. Mine was strong for the time when it was built; I have added nothing to it of that kind, and should fear that its strength might turn against myself; to which we are to consider that a peaceable time would require it should be dismantled. There is danger never to be able to regain it, and it would be very hard to keep; for in intestine dissensions, your man may be of the party you fear; and where religion is the pretext, even a man's nearest relations become unreliable, with some colour of justice. The public exchequer will not maintain our domestic garrisons; they would exhaust it: we ourselves have not the means to do it without ruin, or, which is more inconvenient and injurious, without ruining

[1] "Things sealed up invite a thief: housebreakers pass by open doors."—SENECA, *Epist.*, 68.

the people. The condition of my loss would be scarcely worse. As to the rest, you there lose all; and even your friends will be more ready to accuse your want of vigilance and your improvidence, and your ignorance of and indifference to your own business, than to pity you. That so many garrisoned houses have been undone whereas this of mine remains, makes me apt to believe that they were only lost by being guarded; this gives an enemy both an invitation and colour of reason; all defence shows a face of war. Let who will come to me in God's name; but I shall not invite them; 'tis the retirement I have chosen for my repose from war. I endeavour to withdraw this corner from the public tempest, as I also do another corner in my soul. Our war may put on what forms it will, multiply and diversify itself into new parties; for my part, I shall not budge. Amongst so many garrisoned houses, I am the only person in France, of my condition that I know of, who have purely intrusted mine to the protection of heaven, without removing either plate, deeds, or hangings. I will neither fear nor save myself by halves. If a full acknowledgment can acquire the Divine favour, it will stay with me to the end: if not, I have still continued long enough to render my continuance remarkable and fit to be recorded. How? Why, I have lived thirty years.

CHAPTER XVI.

OF GLORY.

THERE is the name and the thing: the name is a voice which denotes and signifies the thing; the name is no part of the thing, nor of the substance; 'tis a foreign piece joined to the the thing, and outside it.

God, who is all fulness in Himself and the height of all perfection, cannot augment or add anything to Himself within; but His name may be augmented and increased by the blessing and praise we attribute to His exterior works: which praise, seeing we cannot incorporate it in Him, foras-

much as He can have no accession of good, we attribute to His name, which is the part out of Him that is nearest to us. Thus is it that to God alone glory and honour appertain; and there is nothing so remote from reason as that we should go in quest of it for ourselves; for, being indigent and necessitous within, our essence being imperfect, and having continual need of amelioration, 'tis to that we ought to employ all our endeavour. We are all hollow and empty; 'tis not with wind and voice that we are to fill ourselves; we want a more solid substance to repair us: a man starving with hunger would be very simple to seek rather to provide himself with a gay garment than with a good meal: we are to look after that whereof we have most need. As we have it in our ordinary prayers, "Gloria in excelsis Deo, et in terra pax hominibus."[1] We are in want of beauty, health, wisdom, virtue, and such like essential qualities: exterior ornaments should be looked after when we have made provision for necessary things. Divinity treats amply and more pertinently of this subject, but I am not much versed in it.

Chrysippus and Diogenes[2] were the earliest and firmest advocates of the contempt of glory; and maintained that, amongst all pleasures, there was none more dangerous nor more to be avoided, than that which proceeds from the approbation of others. And, in truth, experience makes us sensible of many very hurtful treasons in it. There is nothing that so poisons princes as flattery, nor anything whereby wicked men more easily obtain credit and favour with them; nor panderism so apt and so usually made use of to corrupt the chastity of women as to wheedle and entertain them with their own praises. The first charm the Syrens made use of to allure Ulysses is of this nature:

> "Deça vers nous, deça, o tres-louable Ulysse,
> Et le plus grand honneur dont la Grece fleurisse."[3]

These philosophers said, that all the glory of the world

[1] "Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace to men."—*St. Luke* ii. 14.

[2] Cicero, De Finib., iii. 17.

[3] "Come hither to us, O admirable Ulysses, come hither, thou greatest ornament and pride of Greece."—HOMER, *Odysseus*, xii. 184.

was not worth an understanding man's holding out his finger to obtain it:

"Gloria quantalibet quid erit, si gloria tantum est?"[1]

I say for it alone; for it often brings several commodities along with it, for which it may justly be desired: it acquires us good will, and renders us less subject and exposed to insult and offence from others, and the like. It was also one of the principal doctrines of Epicurus; for this precept of his sect, Conceal thy life, that forbids men to encumber themselves with public negotiations and offices, also necessarily presupposes a contempt of glory, which is the world's approbation of those actions we produce in public.[2] He that bids us conceal ourselves, and to have no other concern but for ourselves, and who will not have us known to others, would much less have us honoured and glorified; and so advises Idomeneus not in any sort to regulate his actions by the common reputation or opinion, except so as to avoid the other accidental inconveniences that the contempt of men might bring upon him.

Those discourses are, in my opinion, very true and rational; but we are, I know not how, double in ourselves, which is the cause that what we believe we do not believe, and cannot disengage ourselves from what we condemn. Let us see the last and dying words of Epicurus; they are grand, and worthy of such a philosopher, and yet they carry some touches of the recommendation of his name and of that humour he had decried by his precepts. Here is a letter that he dictated a little before his last gasp:[3]

"EPICURUS to HERMACHUS, greeting.

"Whilst I was passing over the happy and last day of my life, I write this, but, at the same time, afflicted with such pain in my bladder and bowels that nothing can be greater, but it was recompensed with the pleasure the remembrance of my inventions and doctrines brought to

[1] "What is glory, be it as glorious as it may be, if it be no more than glory?"—JUVENAL, *Sat.*, vii. 81.

[2] Plutarch, Whether the saying, Conceal thy life, is well said.

[3] Cicero, De Finibus, ii. 30.

my soul. Now, as the affection thou hast ever from thy infancy borne towards me and philosophy requires, take upon thee the protection of Metrodorus' children."

This is the letter. And that which makes me interpret that the pleasure he says he had in his soul concerning his inventions, has some reference to the reputation he hoped for thence after his death, is the manner of his will, in which he gives order that Amynomachus and Timocrates, his heirs, should, every January, defray the expense of the celebration of his birthday as Hermachus should appoint; and also the expense that should be made the twentieth of every moon in entertaining the philosophers, his friends, who should assemble in honour of the memory of him and of Metrodorus.[1]

Carneades was head of the contrary opinion, and maintained that glory was to be desired for itself, even as we embrace our posthumous issue for themselves, having no knowledge nor enjoyment of them.[2] This opinion has not failed to be the more universally followed, as those commonly are that are most suitable to our inclinations. Aristotle gives it the first place amongst external goods; and avoids, as too extreme vices, the immoderate either seeking or evading it.[3] I believe that, if we had the books Cicero wrote upon this subject, we should there find pretty stories; for he was so possessed with this passion, that, if he had dared, I think he could willingly have fallen into the excess that others did, that virtue itself was not to be coveted, but upon the account of the honour that always attends it:

> "Paulum sepultæ distat inertiæ
> Celata virtus:"[4]

which is an opinion so false, that I am vexed it could ever enter into the understanding of a man that was honoured with the name of philosopher.

[1] Cicero, De Finibus, ii. 30.

[2] "It is not Carneades whom Cicero charges with this opinion, but other philosophers of Zeno's sect."—COSTE.

[3] Moral. ad Nicom., ii. 7.

[4] "Virtue concealed little differs from dead sloth."—HORACE, *Od.* iv. 9, 29.

If this were true, men need not be virtuous but in public; and we should be no further concerned to keep the operations of the soul, which is the true seat of virtue, regular and in order, than as they are to arrive at the knowledge of others. Is there no more in it, then, but only slily and with circumspection to do ill? "If thou knowest," says Carneades,[1] "of a serpent lurking in a place where, without suspicion, a person is going to sit down, by whose death thou expectest an advantage, thou dost ill if thou dost not give him caution of his danger; and so much the more because the action is to be known by none but thyself." If we do not take up of ourselves the rule of well-doing, if impunity pass with us for justice, to how many sorts of wickedness shall we every day abandon ourselves? I do not find what Sextus Peduceus did, in faithfully restoring the treasure that C. Plotius had committed to his sole secrecy and trust,[2] a thing that I had often done myself, so commendable, as I should think it an execrable baseness had we done otherwise; and I think it of good use in our days to recall the example of P. Sextilius Rufus, whom Cicero[3] accuses to have entered upon an inheritance contrary to his conscience, not only not against law, but even by the determination of the laws themselves; and M. Crassus and Q. Hortensius,[4] who, by reason of their authority and power, having been called in by a stranger to share in the succession of a forged will, that so he might secure his own part, satisfied themselves with having no hand in the forgery, and refused not to make their advantage and to come in for a share: secure enough, if they could shroud themselves from accusations, witnesses, and the cognizance of the laws: "Meminerint Deum se habere testem, id est (ut ego arbitror) mentem suam."[5]

Virtue is a very vain and frivolous thing, if it derive its recommendation from glory; and 'tis to no purpose that we endeavour to give it a station by itself, and separate it from fortune; for what is more accidental than reputation? "Profecto fortuna in omni re dominatur: ea res cunctas

[1] Cicero, De Finibus, ii. 18.
[2] Idem, ibid., 18.
[3] Idem, ibid., 17.
[4] Cicero, De Offic., iii. 18.
[5] "Let them consider they have God to witness, that is (as I interpret it), their own consciences."—CICERO, *De Offic.*, iii. 10.

ex libidine magis, quam ex vero, celebrat, obscuratque."[1] So to order it that actions may be known and seen is purely the work of fortune; 'tis chance that helps us to glory, according to its own temerity. I have often seen her go before merit, and often very much outstrip it. He who first likened glory to a shadow did better than he was aware of; they are both of them things pre-eminently vain: glory also, like a shadow, goes sometimes before the body, and sometimes in length infinitely exceeds it. They who instruct gentlemen only to employ their valour for the obtaining of honour, "quasi non sit honestum, quod nobilitatum non sit;"[2] what do they intend by that but to instruct them never to hazard themselves if they are not seen, and to observe well if there be witnesses present who may carry news of their valour, whereas a thousand occasions of well-doing present themselves which cannot be taken notice of? How many brave individual actions are buried in the crowd of a battle? Whoever shall take upon him to watch another's behaviour in such a confusion is not very busy himself, and the testimony he shall give of his companions' deportment will be evidence against himself. "Vera et sapiens animi magnitudo, honestum illud, quod maxime naturam sequitur, in factis positum, non in gloria, judicat."[3]

All the glory that I pretend to derive from my life is that I have lived in it quiet; in quiet, not according to Metrodorus, or Arcesilaus, or Aristippus, but according to myself. For seeing philosophy has not been able to find out any way to tranquillity that is good in common, let every one seek it in particular.

To what do Cæsar and Alexander owe the infinite grandeur of their renown but to fortune? How many men has she extinguished in the beginning of their progress, of whom we have no knowledge, who brought as much

[1] "Fortune rules in all things, and advances and depresses things more out of her own will than of right and justice."—SALLUST, *Catilina*, c. 8.

[2] "As though it were not a virtue, unless celebrated."—CICERO, *De Offic.*, i. 4.

[3] "The true and wise magnanimity judges that the bravery which most follows nature more consists in act than glory."—CICERO, *De Offic.*, i. 19.

courage to the work as they, if their adverse hap had not cut them off in the first sally of their arms? Amongst so many and so great dangers I do not remember I have anywhere read that Cæsar was ever wounded; a thousand have fallen in less dangers than the least of those he went through. An infinite number of brave actions must be performed without witness and lost, before one turns to account. A man is not always on the top of a breach, or at the head of an army, in the sight of his general, as upon a scaffold; a man is often surprised betwixt the hedge and the ditch; he must run the hazard of his life against a henroost; he must dislodge four rascally musketeers out of a barn; he must prick out single from his party, and alone make some attempts, according as necessity will have it. And whoever will observe will, I believe, find it experimentally true, that occasions of the least lustre are ever the most dangerous; and that in the wars of our own times there have more brave men been lost in occasions of little moment, and in the dispute about some little paltry fort, than in places of greatest importance, and where their valour might have been more honourably employed.

Who thinks his death unworthy of him if he do not fall in some signal occasion, instead of illustrating his death wilfully obscures his life, suffering in the meantime many very just occasions of hazarding himself to slip out of his hands; and every just one is illustrious enough, every man's conscience being a sufficient trumpet to him. "Gloria nostra est testimonium conscientiæ nostræ."[1] He who is only a good man that men may know it, and that he may be the better esteemed when 'tis known: who will not do well but upon condition that his virtue may be known to men: is one from whom much service is not to be expected.

> "Credo ch 'el resto di quel verno cose
> Facesse degne di tenerne conto;
> Ma fur fin a quel tempo si nascose,
> Che non é colpa mia s' or non le conto:
> Perchè Orlando a far l 'opre virtuose,
> Più ch' a narrarle poi, sempre era pronto;

[1] "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience."—2 *Corinthians*, i. 1.

Nè mai fu alcuno de' suoi fatti espresso,
Se non quando ebbe i testimoni appresso."[1]

A man must go to the war upon the account of duty, and expect the recompense that never fails brave and worthy actions, how private soever, or even virtuous thoughts—the satisfaction that a well-disposed conscience receives in itself in doing well. A man must be valiant for himself, and upon account of the advantage it is to him to have his courage seated in a firm and secure place against the assaults of fortune:

"Virtus, repulsæ nescia sordidæ
Intaminatis fulget honoribus:
Nec sumit, aut ponit secures
Arbitrio popularis auræ."[2]

It is not for outward show that the soul is to play its part, but for ourselves within, where no eyes can pierce but our own; there she defends us from the fear of death, of pain, of shame itself: there she arms us against the loss of our children, friends, and fortunes: and when opportunity presents itself, she leads us on to the hazards of war, "non emolumento aliquo, sed ipsius honestatis decore."[3] This profit is of much greater advantage, and more worthy to be coveted and hoped for, than honour and glory, which are no other than a favourable judgment given of us.

A dozen men must be called out of a whole nation to judge about an acre of land; and the judgment of our inclinations and actions, the most difficult and most important matter that is, we refer to the voice and determination of the rabble, the mother of ignorance, injustice, and inconstancy. Is it reasonable that the life of a wise man

[1] "The rest of the winter, I presume, was spent in actions worthy of narration, but they were done so secretly that if I do not tell them I am not to blame, for Orlando was more bent to do great acts than to boast of them, so that no deeds of his were ever known but those that had witnesses."—ARIOSTO, *Orlando Furioso*, xi. 81.

[2] "Virtue, repudiating all base repulse, shines in taintless honours, nor takes nor leaves dignities at the mere will of the vulgar."—HORACE, *Od.*, iii. 2, 17.

[3] "Not for any profit or advantage, but for the beauty of virtue."—CICERO, *De Finib.*, i. 10.

should depend upon the judgment of fools? "An quidquam stultius, quam, quos singulos contemnas, eos aliquid putare, esse universos?"[1] He that makes it his business to please them, will have enough to do and never have done; 'tis a mark that can never be aimed at or hit: "Nil tam inæstimabile est, quam animi multitudinis."[2] Demetrius pleasantly said of the voice of the people, that he made no more account of that which came from above than of that which came from below. Cicero says more: "Ego hoc judico, si quando turpe non sit, tamen non esse non turpe, quum id à multitudine laudatur."[3] No art, no activity of wit, could conduct our steps so as to follow so wandering and so irregular a guide; in this windy confusion of the noise of vulgar reports and opinions that drive us on, no way worth anything can be chosen. Let us not propose to ourselves so floating and wavering an end; let us follow constantly after reason; let the public approbation follow us there, if it will; and as it wholly depends upon fortune, we have no reason sooner to expect it by any other way than that. Even though I would not follow the right way because it is right, I should, however, follow it as having experimentally found that, at the end of the reckoning, 'tis commonly the most happy and of greatest utility: "Dedit hoc providentia hominibus munus, ut honesta magis juvarent."[4] The mariner of old said thus to Neptune, in a great tempest: "O God, thou mayest save me if thou wilt, and if thou wilt, thou mayest destroy me; but, however, I will steer my rudder true.[5] I have seen in my time a thousand men supple, mongrel, ambiguous, whom no one doubted to be more worldly wise than I, destroy themselves, where I have saved myself:

[1] "Can anything be more foolish than to think that those you despise single can be any other when joined together?"—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæst.*, v. 36.

[2] "Nothing is to be so little understood as the minds of the multitude."—LIVY, xxxi. 34.

[3] "I am of opinion, that though a thing be not foul in itself, yet it cannot but become so when commended by the multitude."—CIC., *De Finib.*, ii. 15.

[4] "This gift Providence has given to men, that honest things should be the most useful."—QUINTILIAN, *Inst. Orat.*, i 12.

[5] Seneca, Ep. 85.

"Risi successu posse carere dolos."[1]

Paulus Æmilius, going on the glorious expedition of Macedonia, above all things charged the people of Rome not to speak of his actions during his absence.[2] Oh, the license of judgments is a great disturbance to great affairs! forasmuch as every one has not the firmness of Fabius against common, adverse, and injurious tongues, who rather suffered his authority to be dissected by the vain fancies of men, than to do less well in his charge with a favourable reputation and the popular applause.

There is I know not what natural sweetness in hearing one's self commended; but we are a great deal too fond of it:

"Laudari haud metuam, neque enim mihi cornea fibra est:
Sed recti finemque, extremumque esse recuso,
Euge tuum, et belle."[3]

I care not so much what I am in the opinion of others, as what I am in my own; I would be rich of myself, and not by borrowing. Strangers see nothing but events and outward appearances; everybody can set a good face on the matter, when they have trembling and terror within: they do not see my heart, they see but my countenance. 'Tis with good reason that men decry the hypocrisy that is in war; for what is more easy to an old soldier than to shift in a time of danger, and to counterfeit the brave when he has no more heart than a chicken? There are so many ways to avoid hazarding a man's own person, that we have deceived the world a thousand times before we come to be engaged in a real danger: and even then, finding ourselves in an inevitable necessity of doing something, we can make shift for that time to conceal our apprehensions by setting a good face on the business, though the heart beats within; and whoever had the use of the Platonic ring,[4] which renders those invisible that wear it, if turned inward towards

[1] "I have laughed to see cunning fail of success."—OVID, *Heroid*, i. 18.

[2] Livy, xliv. 22.

[3] "I don't dislike being praised, for my heart is not made of horn; but I deny that 'excellent—admirably done,' are the terms and final aim of virtue."—PERSIUS, i. 47.

[4] The ring of Gyges, Plato, Republic, ii. 3; Cicero, De Offic. iii. 9.

the palm of the hand, a great many would very often hide themselves when they ought most to appear, and would repent being placed in so honourable a post, where necessity must make them bold.

> "Falsus honor juvat, et mendax infamia terret
> Quem, nisi mendosum et mendacem?"[1]

Thus we see how all the judgments that are founded upon external appearances, are marvellously uncertain and doubtful; and that there is no so certain testimony as every one is to himself. In these, how many soldier's boys are companions of our glory? he who stands firm in an open trench, what does he in that more than fifty poor pioneers who open to him the way and cover it with their own bodies for fivepence a day pay, do before him?

> "Non si quid turbida Roma
> Elevet, accedas; examenque improbum in illa
> Castiges trutina: nec te quæsiveris extra."[2]

The dispersing and scattering our names into many mouths, we call making them more great; we will have them there well received, and that this increase turn to their advantage, which is all that can be excusable in this design. But the excess of this disease proceeds so far that many covet to have a name be it what it will. Trogus Pompeius says[3] of Herostratus, and Titus Livius[4] of Manlius Capitolinus, that they were more ambitious of a great reputation than of a good one. This is very common; we are more solicitous that men speak of us, than how they speak: and it is enough for us that our names are often mentioned, be it after what manner it will. It should seem that to be known, is in some sort to have a man's life and its duration in others' keeping. I, for my part, hold

[1] "False honour pleases, and calumny affrights, the guilty and the liar."—HORACE, *Ep.*, i. 16, 39.

[2] "Do not, if turbid Rome should disparage anything, agree with it, nor correct a false balance by that scale; seek not thyself out of thyself."—PERSIUS, *Sat.* i. 5.

[3] It is not Trogus Pompeius, of whom, indeed, only an abridgment by Justin remains. The passage is in Valerius Maximus, viii. 14, Ex. 5.

[4] vi. 11.

that I am not, but in myself; and of that other life of mine which lies in the knowledge of my friends, to consider it naked and simply in itself, I know very well that I am sensible of no fruit nor enjoyment from it but by the vanity of a fantastic opinion; and when I shall be dead, I shall be still and much less sensible of it; and shall, withal, absolutely lose the use of those real advantages that sometimes accidentally follow it. I shall have no more handle whereby to take hold of reputation, neither shall it have any whereby to take hold of or to cleave to me; for to expect that my name should be advanced by it, in the first place, I have no name that is enough my own; of two that I have, one is common to all my race, and, indeed, to others also; there are two families at Paris and Montpellier, whose surname is Montaigne, another in Brittany, and one in Xaintonge, De La Montaigne. The transposition of one syllable only would suffice so to ravel our affairs that I shall share in their glory, and they, peradventure, shall partake of my shame; and, moreover, my ancestors have formerly been surnamed Eyquem, a name wherein a family well known in England is at this day concerned. As to my other name, every one may take it that will, and so, perhaps, I may honour a porter in my own stead. And, besides, though I had a particular distinction by myself, what can it distinguish when I am no more? Can it point out and favour inanity?

> "Nunc levior cippus non imprimit ossa.
> Laudat posteritas; nunc non e manibus illis,
> Nunc non e tumulo, fortunataque favilla,
> Nascentur violæ:"[1]

but of this I have spoken elsewhere. As to what remains, in a great battle where ten thousand men are maimed or killed, there are not fifteen who are taken notice of; it must be some very eminent greatness, or some consequence of great importance that fortune has added to it, that signalizes a private action, not of a harquebuser only, but of a great captain; for to kill a man, or two, or ten: to expose a man's self bravely to the utmost peril of death, is, indeed,

[1] "The tomb will not press with less weight upon my bones. Posterity may praise: what then? not from my manes, not from the tomb, not from the ashes, will violets grow."—PERSIUS, *Sat.* i. 37.

something in every one of us, because we there hazard all; but for the world's concern, they are things so ordinary, and so many of them are every day seen, and there must of necessity be so many of the same kind to produce any notable effect, that we cannot expect any particular renown from it:

"Casus multis hic cognitus, ac jam
Tritus, et e medio fortunæ ductus acervo."[1]

Of so many thousands of valiant men who have died within these fifteen hundred years in France with their swords in their hands, not a hundred have come to our knowledge. The memory, not of the commanders only, but of battles and victories, is buried and gone; the fortunes of above half of the world, for want of a record, stir not from their place, and vanish without duration. If I had unknown events in my possession, I should think with great ease to out-do those that are recorded, in all sorts of examples. Is it not strange that even of the Greeks and Romans, with so many writers and witnesses, and so many rare and noble exploits, so few are arrived at our knowledge?

"Ad nos vix tenuis famæ perlabitur aura."[2]

It will be much if, a hundred years hence, it be remembered in gross that in our times there were civil wars in France. The Lacedæmonians, entering into battle, sacrificed to the Muses,[3] to the end that their actions might be well and worthily written, looking upon it as a divine and no common favour, that brave acts should find witnesses that could give them life and memory. Do we expect that at every musket shot we receive, and at every hazard we run, there must be a register ready to record it? and, besides, a hundred registers may enrol them whose commentaries will not last above three days, and will never come to the sight of any one. We have not the thousandth part of ancient writings; 'tis fortune that gives them a shorter or longer life, according to her favour; and 'tis permissible to doubt

[1] "The accident is known to many, and now trite; and drawn from the midst of Fortune's heap."—JUVENAL, *Sat.* xiii. 9.

[2] "An obscure rumour scarce is hither come."—*Æneid*, vii. 646.

[3] Plutarch, Apothegms of the Ancients.

whether those we have be not the worst, not having seen the rest. Men do not write histories of things of so little moment: a man must have been general in the conquest of an empire or a kingdom; he must have won two and fifty set battles, and always the weaker in number, as Cæsar did: ten thousand brave fellows and many great captains lost their lives valiantly in his service, whose names lasted no longer than their wives and children lived:

"Quos fama obscura recondit."[1]

Even those we see behave themselves the best, three months or three years after they have been knocked on the head, are no more spoken of than if they had never been. Whoever will justly consider, and with due proportion, of what kind of men and of what sort of actions the glory sustains itself in the records of history, will find that there are very few actions and very few persons of our times who can there pretend any right. How many worthy men have we known to survive their own reputation, who have seen and suffered the honour and glory most justly acquired in their youth, extinguished in their own presence? And for three years of this fantastic and imaginary life we must go and throw away our true and essential life, and engage ourselves in a perpetual death! The sages propose to themselves a nobler and more just end in so important an enterprise: "Recte facti, fecisse merces est: officii fructus, ipsum officium est."[2] It were, peradventure, excusable in a painter or other artisan, or in a rhetorician or a grammarian, to endeavour to raise himself a name by his works; but the actions of virtue are too noble in themselves to seek any other reward than from their own value, and especially to seek it in the vanity of human judgments.

If this false opinion, nevertheless, be of such use to the public as to keep men in their duty; if the people are thereby stirred up to virtue; if princes are touched to see the world bless the memory of Trajan, and abominate that of Nero; if it moves them to see the name of that great beast, once so terrible and feared, so freely cursed and

1 "Buried in oblivion."—*Æneid*, v. 302.

2 "The reward of a thing well done is to have done it" (SENECA, *Ep.* 8). The fruit of a good service is the service itself.

reviled by every schoolboy, let it by all means increase, and be as much as possible nursed up and cherished amongst us; and Plato, bending his whole endeavour to make his citizens virtuous, also advises them not to despise the good repute and esteem of the people; and says it falls out, by a certain Divine inspiration, that even the wicked themselves ofttimes, as well by word as opinion, can rightly distinguish the virtuous from the wicked. This person and his tutor are both marvellous and bold artificers everywhere to add divine operations and revelations where human force is wanting. "Ut tragici poetæ confugiunt ad deum, cum explicare argumenti exitum non possunt:"[1] and, peradventure, for this reason it was that Timon, railing at him, called him the great forger of miracles.[2] Seeing that men, by their insufficiency, cannot pay themselves well enough with current money, let the counterfeit be superadded. 'Tis a way that has been practised by all the legislators; and there is no government that has not some mixture either of ceremonial vanity or of false opinion, that serves for a curb to keep the people in their duty. 'Tis for this that most of them have their originals and beginnings fabulous, and enriched with supernatural mysteries; 'tis this that has given credit to bastard religions, and caused them to be countenanced by men of understanding; and for this, that Numa and Sertorius, to possess their men with a better opinion of them, fed them with this foppery; one, that the nymph Egeria, the other that his white hind, brought them all their counsels from the gods. And the authority that Numa gave to his laws, under the title of the patronage of this goddess, Zoroaster, legislator of the Bactrians and Persians, gave to his under the name of the god Oromazis; Trismegistus, legislator of the Egyptians, under that of Mercury; Xamolxis, legislator of the Scythians, under that of Vesta; Charondas, legislator of the Chalcidians, under that of Saturn; Minos, legislator of the Candiots, under that of Jupiter; Lycurgus, legislator of the Lacedæmonians, under that of Apollo; and Draco and Solon, legislators of the Athenians, under that of

[1] "As tragic poets fly to some god when they cannot explain the issue of their argument."—CICERO, *De Nat. Deor.*, i. 20.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, Life of Plato, iii. 26.

Minerva. And every government has a god at the head of it; the others falsely, that truly, which Moses set over the Jews at their departure out of Egypt. The religion of the Bedouins, as the Sire de Joinville reports, amongst other things, enjoined a belief that the soul of him amongst them who died for his prince, went into another body more happy, more beautiful, and more robust than the former; by which means they much more willingly ventured their lives:

> "In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces
> Mortis, et ignavum est redituræ parcere vitæ."[1]

This is a very comfortable belief, however erroneous. Every nation has many such examples of its own; but this subject would require a treatise by itself.

To add one word more to my former discourse, I would advise the ladies no longer to call that honour which is but their duty; "Ut enim consuetudo loquitur, id solum dicitur honestum, quod est populari fama gloriosum;"[2] their duty is the mark, their honour but the outward rind. Neither would I advise them to give this excuse for payment of their denial: for I presuppose that their intentions, their desire, and will, which are things wherein their honour is not at all concerned, forasmuch as nothing thereof appears without, are much better regulated than the effects:

> "Quæ, quia non liceat, non facit, illa facit:"[3]

The offence, both towards God and in the conscience, would be as great to desire as to do it: and, besides, they are actions so private and secret of themselves, as would be easily enough kept from the knowledge of others, wherein the honour consists, if they had not another respect to their duty, and the affection they bear to chastity, for itself. Every woman of honour will much rather chose to lose her honour, than to hurt her conscience.

[1] "Men invite the steel and seek death; 'tis base to save a life that is to return."—LUCAN, i. 461.

[2] "According to the vulgar notion, which only approves that as honourable that is glorious by the public voice."—CICERO, *De Finibus*, ii. 15.

[3] "She who only refuses, because 'tis forbidden to consent, consents."—OVID, *Amor.*, ii. 4, 4.

CHAPTER XVII.

OF PRESUMPTION.

THERE is another sort of glory, which is the having too good an opinion of our own worth. 'Tis an inconsiderate affection with which we flatter ourselves, and that represents us to ourselves other than we truly are: like the passion of love, that lends beauties and graces to the object, and makes those who are caught by it, with a depraved and corrupt judgment, consider the thing which they love other and more perfect than it is.

I would not, nevertheless, for fear of failing on this side, that a man should not know himself aright, or think himself less than he is; the judgment ought in all things to maintain its rights; 'tis all the reason in the world he should discern in himself, as well as in others, what truth sets before him; if it be Cæsar, let him boldly think himself the greatest captain in the world. We are nothing but ceremony; ceremony carries us away, and we leave the substance of things: we hold by the branches, and quit the trunk and the body; we have taught the ladies to blush when they hear that but named which they are not at all afraid to do: we dare not call our members by their right names, yet are not afraid to employ them in all sorts of debauchery: ceremony forbids us to express by words things that are lawful and natural, and we obey it: reason forbids us to do things unlawful and ill, and nobody obeys it. I find myself here fettered by the laws of ceremony; for it neither permits a man to speak well of himself, nor ill: we will leave it there for this time.

They whom fortune (call it good or ill) has made to pass their lives in some eminent degree, may by their public actions manifest what they are: but they whom she has only employed in the crowd, and of whom nobody will say a word unless they speak themselves, are to be excused if they take the boldness to speak of themselves to such as are interested to know them; by the example of Lucilius,

"Ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim
Credebat libris, neque si male cesserat, usquam
Decurrens alio, neque si bene: quo fit, ut omnis,
Votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella
Vita senis;"[1]

he always committed to paper his actions and thoughts, and there portrayed himself such as he found himself to be; "Nec id Rutilio et Scauro citra fidem, aut obtrectationi fuit."[2]

I remember, then, that from my infancy there was observed in me I know not what kind of carriage and behaviour, that seemed to relish of pride and arrogance. I will say this, by the way, that it is not unreasonable to suppose that we have qualities and inclinations so much our own, and so incorporate in us, that we have not the means to feel and recognize them: and of such natural inclinations the body will retain a certain bent, without our knowledge or consent. It was an affectation conformable with his beauty, that made Alexander carry his head on one side, and caused Alcibiades to lisp; Julius Cæsar scratched his head with one finger,[3] which is the fashion of a man full of troublesome thoughts; and Cicero, as I remember, was wont to pucker up his nose, a sign of a man given to scoffing; such motions as these may imperceptibly happen in us. There are other artificial ones which I meddle not with, as salutations and congees, by which men acquire, for the most part unjustly, the reputation of being humble and courteous; one may be humble out of pride. I am prodigal enough of my hat, especially in summer, and never am so saluted but that I pay it again from persons of what quality soever, unless they be in my own service. I should make it my request to some princes whom I know, that they would be more sparing of that ceremony, and bestow that courtesy where it is more due; for being so indiscreetly and indifferently conferred on all,

[1] "He confided his secret thoughts to his writings, as to a tried friend, and for good and evil, sought no other confidant: hence it came to pass, that the old man's life is there all seen as on a votive tablet."—HORACE, *Sat.* ii. 1, 30.

[2] "Nor were Rutilius or Scaurus misbelieved or condemned for writing their memoirs."—TACITUS, *Agricola*, c. 1.

[3] Plutarch, in vita, c. 1.

it is thrown away to no purpose; if it be without respect of persons, it loses its effect. Amongst irregular deportment, let us not forget that haughty one of the Emperor Constantius,[1] who always in public held his head upright and stiff, without bending or turning on either side, not so much as to look upon those who saluted him on one side, planting his body in a rigid immovable posture, without suffering it to yield to the motion of his coach, not daring so much as to spit, blow his nose, or wipe his face before people. I know not whether the gestures that were observed in me were of this first quality, and whether I had really any occult propension to this vice, as it might well be; and I cannot be responsible for the motions of the body; but as to the motions of the soul, I must here confess what I think of the matter.

This glory consists of two parts; the one in setting too great a value upon ourselves, and the other in setting too little a value upon others. As to the one, methinks these considerations ought, in the first place, to be of some force: I feel myself importuned by an error of the soul that displeases me, both as it is unjust, and still more as it is troublesome; I attempt to correct it, but I cannot root it out; and this is, that I lessen the just value of things that I possess, and overvalue things, because they are foreign, absent, and none of mine; this humour spreads very far. As the prerogative of the authority makes husbands look upon their own wives with a vicious disdain, and many fathers their children; so I, betwixt two equal merits, should always be swayed against my own; not so much that the jealousy of my advancement and bettering troubles my judgment, and hinders me from satisfying myself, as that of itself possession begets a contempt of what it holds and rules. Foreign governments, manners, and languages, insinuate themselves into my esteem; and I am sensible that Latin allures me by the favour of its dignity to value it above its due, as it does with children, and the common sort of people: the domestic government, house, horse, of my neighbour, though no better than my own, I prize above my own, because they are not mine. Besides that I

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxi. 14.

am very ignorant in my own affairs, I am struck by the assurance that every one has of himself: whereas, there is scarcely anything that I am sure I know, or that I dare be responsible to myself that I can do: I have not my means of doing anything in condition and ready, and am only instructed therein after the effect; as doubtful of my own force as I am of another's. Whence it comes to pass that if I happen to do anything commendable, I attribute it more to my fortune than industry, forasmuch as I design everything by chance and in fear. I have this, also, in general, that of all the opinions antiquity has held of men in gross, I most willingly embrace and adhere to those that most contemn and undervalue us, and most push us to naught; methinks, philosophy has never so fair a game to play as when it falls upon our vanity and presumption; when it most lays open our irresolution, weakness, and ignorance. I look upon the too good opinion that man has of himself to be the nursing mother of all the most false opinions, both public and private. Those people who ride astride upon the epicycle of Mercury, who see so far into the heavens, are worse to me than a tooth-drawer that comes to draw my teeth; for in my study, the subject of which is man, finding so great a variety of judgments, so profound a labyrinth of difficulties, one upon another, so great diversity and uncertainty, even in the school of wisdom itself, you may judge, seeing these people could not resolve upon the knowledge of themselves and their own condition, which is continually before their eyes, and within them, seeing they do not know how that moves which they themselves move, nor how to give us a description of the springs they themselves govern and make use of, how can I believe them about the ebbing and flowing of the Nile. The curiosity of knowing things has been given to man for a scourge, says the holy Scripture.

But to return to what concerns myself; I think it would be very difficult for any other man to have a meaner opinion of himself; nay, for any other to have a meaner opinion of me than I have of myself: I look upon myself as one of the common sort, saving in this, that I have no better an opinion of myself; guilty of the meanest and most popular defects, but not disowning or excusing them; and I do not

value myself upon any other account than because I know my own value. If there be any vanity in the case, 'tis superficially infused into me by the treachery of my complexion, and has no body that my judgment can discern: I am sprinkled, but not dyed. For in truth, as to the effects of the mind, there is no part of me, be it what it will, with which I am satisfied; and the approbation of others makes me not think the better of myself. My judgment is tender and nice, especially in things that concern myself; I ever repudiate myself, and feel myself float and waver by reason of my weakness. I have nothing of my own that satisfies my judgment. My sight is clear and regular enough, but, at working, it is apt to dazzle; as I most manifestly find in poetry: I love it infinitely, and am able to give a tolerable judgment of other men's works; but, in good earnest, when I apply myself to it, I play the child, and am not able to endure myself. A man may play the fool in everything else, but not in poetry;

"Mediocribus esse poetis
Non dii, non homines, non concessere columnæ."[1]

I would to God this sentence was written over the doors of all our printers, to forbid the entrance of so many rhymesters!

"Verum
Nihil securius est malo poeta."[2]

Why have not we such people?[3] Dionysius the father valued himself upon nothing so much as his poetry; at the Olympic games, with chariots surpassing all the others in magnificence, he sent also poets and musicians to present his verses, with tent and pavilions royally gilt and hung with tapestry. When his verses came to be recited, the excellence of the delivery at first attracted the attention of the people; but when they afterwards came to poise the meanness of the composition, they first entered

[1] "Neither men, nor gods, nor the pillars (on which the poets offered their writings), permit mediocrity in poets."—HORACE, *De Arte Poet.*, 372.

[2] "The truth is, that nothing is more confident than a bad poet."—MARTIAL, xii. 63, 13.

[3] As those about to be mentioned.

into disdain, and continuing to nettle their judgments, presently proceeded to fury, and ran to pull down and tear to pieces all his pavilions: and, that his chariots neither performed anything to purpose in the race, and that the ship which brought back his people failed of making Sicily, and was by the tempest driven and wrecked upon the coast of Tarentum, they certainly believed was through the anger of the gods, incensed, as they themselves were, against that paltry poem; and even the mariners who escaped from the wreck seconded this opinion of the people: to which also the oracle that foretōld his death seemed to subscribe; which was, "that Dionysius should be near his end, when he should have overcome those who were better than himself," which he interpreted of the Carthaginians, who surpassed him in power; and having war with them, often declined the victory, not to incur the sense of this prediction; but he understood it ill; for the god indicated the time of the advantage, that by favour and injustice he obtained at Athens over the tragic poets, better than himself, having caused his own play called the Leneians to be acted in emulation; presently after which victory he died, and partly of the excessive joy he conceived at the success.[1]

What I find tolerable of mine, is not so really and in itself, but in comparison of other worse things, that I see well enough received. I envy the happiness of those who can please and hug themselves in what they do; for 'tis an easy thing to be so pleased, because a man extracts that pleasure from himself, especially if he be constant in his self-conceit. I know a poet, against whom the intelligent and the ignorant, abroad and at home, both heaven and earth exclaim that he has but very little notion of it; and yet, for all that, he has never a whit the worse opinion of himself; but is always falling upon some new piece, always contriving some new invention, and still persists in his opinion, by so much the more obstinately, as it only concerns him to maintain it.

My works are so far from pleasing me, that as often as I review them, they disgust me:

[1] Diodorus Siculus, xv. 74. The play, however, was called the "Ransom of Hector." It was the games at which it was acted that were called Leneian.

"Cum relego, scripsisse pudet; quia plurima cerno,
Me quoque, qui feci, judice, digna lini."[1]

I have always an idea in my soul, and a sort of disturbed image which presents me as in a dream with a better form than that I have made use of; but I cannot catch it nor fit it to my purpose; and even that idea is but of the meaner sort. Hence I conclude that the productions of those great and rich souls of former times are very much beyond the utmost stretch of my imagination or my wish: their writings do not only satisfy and fill me, but they astound me, and ravish me with admiration; I judge of their beauty; I see it, if not to the utmost, yet so far at least as 'tis possible for me to aspire. Whatever I undertake, I owe a sacrifice to the Graces, as Plutarch says of some one,[2] to conciliate their favour;

"Si quid enim placet,
Si quid dulce hominum sensibus influit,
Debentur lepidis omnia Gratiis."[3]

They abandon me throughout; all I write is rude; polish and beauty are wanting: I cannot set things off to any advantage; my handling adds nothing to the matter; for which reason I must have it forcible, very full, and that has lustre of its own. If I pitch upon subjects that are popular and gay, 'tis to follow my own inclination, who do not affect a grave and ceremonious wisdom, as the world does; and to make myself more sprightly, but not my style more wanton, which would rather have them grave and severe; at least, if I may call that a style, which is an informand irregular way of speaking, a popular jargon, a proceeding without definition, division, conclusion, perplexed like that Amafanius and Rabirius.[4] I can neither please nor delight, nor even tickle my readers: the best story in the world is spoiled by my handling, and becomes

[1] "When I reperuse, I blush at what I have written; I ever see one passage after another that, I the author, being the judge, consider should be erased."—OVID, *De Ponto*, i. 5, 15.

[2] Xenocrates in the Precepts of Marriage, c. 26.

[3] "If anything please that I write, if it infuse delight into men's minds, all is due to the charming Graces." The verses are probably by some modern poet.

[4] Cicero, Acad., i. 2.

flat; I cannot speak but in rough earnest, and am totally unprovided of that facility which I observe in many of my acquaintance, of entertaining the first comers and keeping a whole company in breath, or taking up the ear of a prince with all sorts of discourse without wearying themselves: they never want matter by reason of the faculty and grace they have in taking hold of the first thing that starts up, and accommodating it to the humour and capacity of those with whom they have to do. Princes do not much affect solid discourses, nor I to tell stories. The first and easiest reasons, which are commonly the best taken, I know not how to employ: I am an ill orator to the common sort. I am apt of everything to say the extremest that I know. Cicero is of opinion[1] that in treatises of philosophy the exordium is the hardest part; if this be true, I am wise in sticking to the conclusion. And yet we are to know how to wind the string to all notes, and the sharpest is that which is the most seldom touched. There is at least as much perfection in elevating an empty as in supporting a weighty thing. A man must sometimes superficially handle things, and sometimes push them home. I know very well that most men keep themselves in this lower form from not conceiving things otherwise than by this outward bark; but I likewise know that the greatest masters, and Xenophon and Plato are often seen to stoop to this low and popular manner of speaking and treating of things, but supporting it with graces which never fail them.

Further, my language has nothing in it that is facile and polished; 'tis rough, free, and irregular, and as such pleases, if not my judgment, at all events my inclination, but I very well perceive that I sometimes give myself too much rein, and that by endeavouring to avoid art and affectation I fall into the other inconvenience:

> "Brevis esse laboro,
> Obscurus fio."[2]

Plato says,[3] that the long or the short are not properties that either take away or give value to language. Should I

[1] De Universo, c. 2.

[2] "Endeavouring to be brief, I become obscure."—HOR., *Art. Poet.*, 25.

[3] Republic, x.

attempt to follow the other more moderate, united, and regular style, I should never attain to it; and though the short round periods of Sallust best suit with my humour, yet I find Cæsar much grander and harder to imitate; and though my inclination would rather prompt me to imitate Seneca's way of writing, yet I do, nevertheless, more esteem that of Plutarch. Both in doing and speaking I simply follow my own natural way; whence, peradventure, it falls out that I am better at speaking than writing. Motion and action animate words, especially in those who lay about them briskly, as I do, and grow hot. The comportment, the countenance, the voice, the robe, the place, will set off some things that of themselves would appear no better than prating. Massalla complains in Tacitus[1] of the straightness of some garments in his time, and of the fashion of the benches where the orators were to declaim, that were a disadvantage to their eloquence.

My French tongue is corrupted, both in the pronunciation and otherwise, by the barbarism of my country. I never saw a man who was a native of any of the provinces on this side of the kingdom who had not a twang of his place of birth,[2] and that was not offensive to ears that were purely French. And yet it is not that I am so perfect in my Perigordin: for I can no more speak it than High Dutch, nor do I much care. 'Tis a language (as the rest about me on every side, of Poitou, Xaintonge, Angoumousin, Limosin, Auvergne), a poor, drawling, scurvy language. There is, indeed, above us towards the mountains a sort of Gascon spoken, that I am mightily taken with: blunt, brief, significant, and in truth a more manly and military language than any other I am acquainted with, as sinewy, powerful, and pertinent as the French is graceful, neat, and luxuriant.

As to the Latin, which was given me for my mother tongue, I have, by discontinuance, lost the use of speaking it, and, indeed, of writing it too, wherein I formerly had a particular reputation,[3] by which you may see how inconsiderable I am on that side.

[1] De Oratoribus, towards the end.
[2] Qui ne sentist bien evidemment son ramage.
[3] Je me faisois appeller Maistre Jehan.

Beauty is a thing of great recommendation in the correspondence amongst men; 'tis the first means of acquiring the favour and good liking of one another, and no man is so barbarous and morose as not to perceive himself in some sort struck with its attraction. The body has a great share in our being, has an eminent place there, and therefore its structure and composition are of very just consideration. They who go about to disunite and separate our two principal parts from one another are to blame; we must, on the contrary, reunite and rejoin them. We must command the soul not to withdraw and entertain itself apart, not to despise and abandon the body (neither can she do it but by some apish counterfeit), but to unite herself close to it, to embrace, cherish, assist, govern, and advise it, and to bring it back and set it into the true way when it wanders; in sum, to espouse and be a husband to it, so that their effects may not appear to be diverse and contrary, but uniform and concurring. Christians have a particular instruction concerning this connection, for they know that the Divine justice embraces this society and juncture of body and soul, even to the making the body capable of eternal rewards; and that God has an eye to the whole man's ways, and will that he receive entire chastisement or reward according to his demerits or merits. The sect of the Peripatetics, of all sects the most sociable, attribute to wisdom this sole care equally to provide for the good of these two associate parts: and the other sects, in not sufficiently applying themselves to the consideration of this mixture, show themselves to be divided, one for the body and the other for the soul, with equal error, and to have lost sight of their subject, which is Man, and their guide, which they generally confess to be Nature. The first distinction that ever was amongst men, and the first consideration that gave some pre-eminence over others, 'tis likely was the advantage of beauty:

> "Agros divisere atque dedere
> Pro facie cujusque, et viribus, ingenioque;
> Nam facies multum valuit, viresque vigebant."[1]

[1] "They distributed and conferred the lands to every man according to his beauty, strength, or understanding, for beauty and strength had first influence."—LUCRETIUS, v. 1109.

Now I am of something lower than the middle stature, a defect that not only borders upon deformity, but carries withal a great deal of inconvenience along with it, especially for those who are in office and command; for the authority which a graceful presence and a majestic mien beget, is wanting. C. Marius did not willingly enlist any soldiers who were not six feet high.[1] The Courtier[2] has, indeed, reason to desire a moderate stature in the gentlemen he is setting forth, rather than any other, and to reject all strangeness that should make him be pointed at. But if I were to choose whether this medium must be rather below than above the common standard, I would not have it so in a soldier. Little men, says Aristotle,[3] are pretty, but not handsome; and greatness of soul is discovered in a great body, as beauty is in a conspicuous stature: the Ethiopians and Indians, says he,[4] in choosing their kings and magistrates, had regard to the beauty and stature of their persons. They had reason; for it creates respect in those who follow them, and is a terror to the enemy, to see a leader of a brave and goodly stature march at the head of a battalion.

> "Ipse inter primos præstanti corpore Turnus
> Vertitur, arma tenens, et toto vertice supra est."[5]

Our holy and heavenly king, of whom every circumstance is most carefully and with the greatest religion and reverence to be observed, has not himself rejected bodily recommendation, "Speciosus forma præ filiis hominum."[6] And Plato,[7] together with temperance and fortitude, requires beauty in the conservators of his republic. It would vex you that a man should apply himself to you amongst your servants to inquire where Monsieur is, and that you should only have the remainder of the compliment of the hat that is made to your barber or your secretary; as it happened to poor Philopœmen,[8] who arriving the first of all his company at an inn where he was expected, the hostess who

[1] Vegetius, i. 5. [2] Il Cortigiano, of Balthasar Castiglioni.
[3] Moral. ad Nicom., iv., 7. [4] Politics, iv. 4.
[5] "In the first rank marched Turnus, brandishing his weapon, taller by a head than all the rest."—VIRGIL, *Æneid*, vii. 783.
[6] "He is fairer than the children of men."—*Psalm* xlv. 2.
[7] Republic. vii. [8] Plutarch, in vita, c. i.

knew him not, and saw him an unsightly fellow, employed him to go help her maids a little to draw water, and make a fire against Philopœmen's coming: the gentlemen of his train arriving presently after, and surprised to see him busy in this fine employment, for he failed not to obey his landlady's command, asked him what he was doing there: "I am," said he, "paying the penalty of my ugliness." The other beauties belong to women; the beauty of stature is the only beauty of men. Where there is a contemptible stature, neither the largeness and roundness of the forehead, nor the whiteness and sweetness of the eyes, nor the moderate proportion of the nose, nor the littleness of the ears and mouth, nor the evenness and whiteness of the teeth, nor the thickness of a well-set brown beard, shining like the husk of a chestnut, nor curled hair, nor the just proportion of the head, nor a fresh complexion, nor a pleasing air of a face, nor a body without any offensive scent, nor the just proportion of limbs, can make a handsome man. I am, as to the rest, strong and well knit; my face is not puffed, but full, and my complexion betwixt jovial and melancholic, moderately sanguine and hot,

"Unde rigent setis mihi crura, et pectora villis;"[1]

my health vigorous and sprightly, even to a well advanced age, and rarely troubled with sickness. Such I was, for I do not now make any account of myself, now that I am engaged in the avenues of old age, being already past forty:

"Minutatim vires et robur adultum
Frangit, et in partem pejorem liquitur ætas:"[2]

what shall be from this time forward, will be but a half-being, and no more me: I every day escape and steal away from myself:

"Singula de nobis anni prædantur euntes:"[3]

Agility and address I never had, and yet am the son of a

[1] "Whence 'tis my thighs and breast bristle with hair."—MARTIAL, ii. 36, 5.

[2] "Time by degrees breaks our strength, and makes us grow feeble."—LUCRETIUS, ii. 1131.

[3] "Of the fleeting years each steals something from me."—HORACE, *Ep.* ii. 2.

very active and sprightly father, who continued to be so to an extreme old age. I have scarce known any man of his condition, his equal in all bodily exercises: as I have seldom met with any who have not excelled me, except in running, at which I was pretty good. In music or singing, for which I have a very unfit voice, or to play on any sort of instrument, they could never teach me anything. In dancing, tennis, or wrestling, I could never arrive to more than an ordinary pitch; in swimming, fencing, vaulting, and leaping, to none at all. My hands are so clumsy that I cannot even write so as to read it myself, so that I had rather do what I have scribbled over again, than take upon me the trouble to make it out. I do not read much better than I write, and feel that I weary my auditors: otherwise, not a bad clerk. I cannot decently fold up a letter, nor could ever make a pen, or carve at table worth a pin, nor saddle a horse, nor carry a hawk and fly her, nor hunt the dogs, nor lure a hawk, nor speak to a horse. In fine, my bodily qualities are very well suited to those of my soul; there is nothing sprightly, only a full and firm vigour: I am patient enough of labour and pains, but it is only when I go voluntary to work, and only so long as my own desire prompts me to it,

"Molliter austerum studio fallente laborem:"[1]

otherwise, if I am not allured with some pleasure, or have other guide than my own pure and free inclination, I am good for nothing: for I am of a humour that, life and health excepted, there is nothing for which I will bite my nails, and that I will purchase at the price of torment of mind and constraint:

"Tanti mihi non sit opaci
Omnis arena Tagi, quodque in mare volvitur aurum."[2]

Extremely idle, extremely given up to my own inclination both by nature and art, I would as willingly lend a man my blood as my pains. I have a soul free and entirely its

[1] "The labour we delight in physics pain."—HORACE, *Sat.* ii. 2, 12. Cf. Shakespeare's Macbeth, ii. 3.

[2] "I would not buy with Tagus sands so dear, nor all the gold that lies in the sea."—JUVENAL, *Sat.* iii. 54.

own, and accustomed to guide itself after its own fashion; having hitherto never had either master or governor imposed upon me; I have walked as far as I would, and at the pace that best pleased myself; this is it that has rendered me unfit for the service of others, and has made me of no use to any one but myself.

Now was there any need of forcing my heavy and lazy disposition; for being born to such a fortune as I had reason to be contented with (a reason, nevertheless, that a thousand others of my acquaintance would have rather made use of for a plank upon which to pass over in search of higher fortune, to tumult and disquiet), and with as much intelligence as I required, I sought for no more, and also got no more:

> "Non agimur tumidis velis Aquilone secundo,
> Non tamen adversis ætatem ducimus Austris;
> Viribus, ingenio, specie, virtute, loco, re,
> Extremi primorum, extremis usque priores."[1]

I had only need of what was sufficient to content me: which nevertheless is a government of soul, to take it right, equally difficult in all sorts of conditions, and that, of custom, we see more easily found in want than in abundance: forasmuch, peradventure, as according to the course of our other passions, the desire of riches is more sharpened by their use than by the need of them: and the virtue of moderation more rare than that of patience; and I never had anything to desire, but happily to enjoy the estate that God by His bounty had put into my hands. I have never known anything of trouble, and have had little to do in anything but the management of my own affairs: or, if I have, it has been upon condition to do it at my own leisure and after my own method; committed to my trust by such as had a confidence in me, who did not importune me, and who knew my humour; for good horsemen will make shift to get service out of a rusty and broken-winded jade.

Even my infancy was trained up after a gentle and free

[1] "The northern wind does not agitate my sails; nor Auster trouble my course with storms. In strength, talent, figure, virtue, honour, wealth, I am short of the foremost, but before the last."—HORACE, *Ep.* ii. 2, 201.

manner, and exempt from any rigorous subjection. All this has helped me to a complexion delicate and incapable of solicitude, even to that degree that I love to have my losses and the disorders wherein I am concerned, concealed from me. In the account of my expenses, I put down what my negligence costs me in feeding and maintaining it;

"Hæc nempe supersunt,
Quæ dominum fallunt, quæ prosunt furibus."[1]

I love not to know what I have, that I may be less sensible of my loss; I entreat those who serve me, where affection and integrity are absent, to deceive me with something like a decent appearance. For want of constancy enough to support the shock of adverse accidents to which we are subject, and of patience seriously to apply myself to the management of my affairs, I nourish as much as I can this in myself, wholly leaving all to fortune "to take all things at the worst, and to resolve to bear that worst with temper and patience;" that is the only thing I aim at, and to which I apply my whole meditation. In a danger, I do not so much consider how I shall escape it, as of how little importance it is, whether I escape it or no: should I be left dead upon the place, what matter? Not being able to govern events, I govern myself, and apply myself to them, if they will not apply themselves to me. I have no great art to evade, escape from or force fortune, and by prudence to guide and incline things to my own bias. I have still less patience to undergo the troublesome and painful care therein required; and the most uneasy condition for me is to be suspended on urgent occasions, and to be agitated betwixt hope and fear.

Deliberation, even in things of lightest moment, is very troublesome to me; and I find my mind more put to it to undergo the various tumblings and tossings of doubt and consultation, than to set up its rest and to acquiesce in whatever shall happen after the die is thrown. Few passions break my sleep, but of deliberations, the least will do it. As in roads, I preferably avoid those that are sloping and slippery, and put myself into the beaten track how

[1] "That overplus, which the owner knows not of, but which benefits the thieves."—HORACE, *Ep.* i. 645.

dirty or deep soever, where I can fall no lower, and there seek my safety: so I love misfortunes that are purely so, that do not torment and teaze me with the uncertainty of their growing better; but that at the first push plunge me directly into the worst that can be expected:

"Dubia plus torquent mala."[1]

In events, I carry myself like a man; in the conduct, like a child. The fear of the fall more fevers me than the fall itself. The game is not worth the candle. The covetous man fares worse with his passion than the poor, and the jealous man than the cuckold; and a man ofttimes loses more by defending his vineyard than if he gave it up. The lowest walk is the safest; 'tis the seat of constancy; you have there need of no one but yourself; 'tis there founded and wholly stands upon its own basis. Has not this example of a gentleman very well known, some air of philosophy in it? He married, being well advanced in years, having spent his youth in good fellowship, a great talker and a great jeerer, calling to mind how much the subject of cuckoldry had given him occasion to talk and scoff at others. To prevent them from paying him in his own coin, he married a wife from a place where any one may have flesh for his money: "Good morrow, strumpet;" "good morrow, cuckold;" and there was not anything wherewith he more commonly and openly entertained those who came to see him, than with this design of his, by which he stopped the private chattering of mockers, and blunted all the point from this reproach.

As to ambition, which is neighbour, or rather daughter, to presumption, fortune, to advance me, must have come and taken me by the hand; for to trouble myself for an uncertain hope, and to have submitted myself to all the difficulties that accompany those who endeavour to bring themselves into credit in the beginning of their progress, I could never have done it:

"Spem pretio non emo:"[2]

[1] "Doubtful ills plague us worst."—SENECA, *Agamemnon*, ii. 1, 47.

[2] "I will not purchase hope with ready money."—TERENCE, *Adelphi*, ii. 3, 11.

I apply myself to what I see and to what I have in my hand, and go not very far from the shore;

"Alter remus aquas, alter tibi radat arenas:"[1]

and besides, a man rarely arrives to these advancements but in first hazarding what he has of his own; and I am of opinion, that if a man have sufficient to maintain him in the condition wherein he was born and brought up, 'tis a great folly to hazard that upon the uncertainty of augmenting it. He to whom fortune has denied whereon to set his foot, and to settle a quiet and composed way of living, is to be excused if he venture what he has, because, happen what will, necessity puts him upon shifting for himself:

"Capienda rebus in malis præceps via est:"[2]

and I rather excuse a younger brother for exposing what his friends have left him to the courtesy of fortune, than him with whom the honour of his family is entrusted, who cannot be necessitous but by his own fault. I have found a much shorter and more easy way, by the advice of the good friends I had in my younger days, to free myself from any such ambition, and to sit still;

"Cui sit conditio dulcis sine pulvere palmæ:"[3]

judging rightly enough of my own strength, that it was not capable of any great matters; and calling to mind the saying of the late Chancellor Olivier,[4] that the French were like monkeys that swarm up a tree from branch to branch, and never stop till they come to the highest, and there show their breech.

"Turpe est, quod nequeas, capiti committere pondus,
Et pressum inflexo mox dare terga genu."[5]

I should find the best qualities I have useless in this age;

[1] "One oar plunging into the sea, the other raking the sands."—PROPERTIUS, iii. 3, 23.

[2] "A desperate case must have a desperate course."—SENECA, *Agamemnon*, ii. 1, 47.

[3] "What more agreeable condition, than to have gained the palm without the dust of the course."—HORACE, *Ep.* i. 1, 51.

[4] He died in 1560.

[5] "It is a shame to load the head so that it cannot bear the burthen, and the knees give way."—PROPERTIUS, iii. 9, 5.

the facility of my manners would have been called weakness and negligence; my faith and conscience, scrupulosity and superstition; my liberty and freedom would have been reputed troublesome, inconsiderate, and rash. Ill luck is good for something. It is good to be born in a very depraved age; for so, in comparison of others, you shall be reputed virtuous cheaply; he who in our days is but a parricide and a sacrilegious person, is an honest man and a man of honour:

> "Nunc, si depositum non inficiatur amicus,
> Si reddat veterem cum tota ærugine follem,
> Prodigiosa fides, et Tuscis digna libellis,
> Quæque coronata lustrari debeat agna:" [1]

and never was time or place wherein princes might propose to themselves more assured or greater rewards for virtue and justice. The first who shall make it his business to get himself into favour and esteem by those ways, I am much deceived if he do not and by the best title outstrip his competitors: force and violence can do something, but not always all.... We see merchants, country justices, and artizans, go cheek by jowl with the best gentry in valour and military knowledge: they perform honourable actions, both in public engagements and private quarrels; they fight duels, they defend towns in our present wars; a prince stifles his special recommendation, renown, in this crowd; let him shine bright in humanity, truth, loyalty, temperance, and especially in justice; marks rare, unknown, and exiled; 'tis by no other means but by the sole good-will of the people that he can do his business; and no other qualities can attract their good-will like those, as being of the greatest utility to them: "Nil est tam populare, quam bonitas." [2]

By this standard, I had been great and rare, just as I find myself now pigmy and vulgar by the standard of some past ages, wherein, if no other better qualities concurred, it was ordinary and common to see a man moderate in his

[1] "Nowadays, if a friend does not deny his trust, but restores the old purse with all its rusty coin untouched; 'tis a prodigious faith, that ought to be enrolled in gold, amongst the Tuscan annals, and a crowned lamb should be sacrificed to such exemplary integrity."—JUVENAL, *Sat.* xiii. 60.

[2] "Nothing is so popular as goodness."—CICERO, *Pro Ligar.*, c. 12.

revenges, gentle in resenting injuries, religious of his word, neither double nor supple, nor accommodating his faith to the will of others, or the turns of the times: I would rather see all affairs go to wreck and ruin than falsify my faith to secure them. For as to this new virtue of feigning and dissimulation, which is now in so great credit, I mortally hate it; and of all vices find none that evidences so much baseness and meanness of spirit. 'Tis a cowardly and servile humour to hide and disguise a man's self under a visor, and not to dare to show himself what he is; 'tis by this our servants are trained up to treachery; being brought up to speak what is not true, they make no conscience of a lie. A generous heart ought not to belie its own thoughts; it will make itself seen within; all there is good, or at least, human. Aristotle[1] reputes it the office of magnanimity openly and professedly to love and hate; to judge and speak with all freedom; and not to value the approbation or dislike of others in comparison of truth. Apollonius[2] said, it was for slaves to lie, and for freemen to speak truth: 'tis the chief and fundamental part of virtue; we must love it for itself. He who speaks truth because he is obliged so to do, and because it serves him, and who is not afraid to lie when it signifies nothing to anybody, is not sufficiently true. My soul naturally abominates lying, and hates the very thought of it. I have an inward shame and a sharp remorse, if sometimes a lie escape me; as sometimes it does, being surprised by occasions that allow me no premeditation. A man must not always tell all, for that were folly: but what a man says should be what he thinks, otherwise 'tis knavery. I do not know what advantage men pretend to by eternally counterfeiting and dissembling, if not, never to be believed when they speak the truth; it may once or twice pass with men; but to profess the concealing their thought, and to brag, as some of our princes have done, that they would burn their shirts if they knew their true intentions, which was a saying of the ancient Metellus of Macedon;[3] and that they who know not how to

[1] Moral. ad Nicom., iv. 8.
[2] Philostratus, p. 409 of ed. of 1709.
[3] Aurelius Victor, De Vir. Illust., c. 66.

dissemble know not how to rule,[1] is to give warning to all who have anything to do with them, that all they say is nothing but lying and deceit: "Quo quis versutior et callidior est, hoc invisior et suspectior, detracta opinione probitatis:"[2] it were a great simplicity in any one to lay any stress either on the countenance or word of a man, who has put on a resolution to be always another thing without than he is within, as Tiberius did; and I cannot conceive what part such persons can have in conversation with men, seeing they produce nothing that is received as true: whoever is disloyal to truth, is the same to falsehood also.

Those of our time, who have considered in the establishment of the duty of a prince, the good of his affairs only, and have preferred that to the care of his faith and conscience, might have something to say to a prince whose affairs fortune had put into such a posture that he might for ever establish them by only once breaking his word: but it will not go so; they often buy in the same market; they make more than once peace and enter into more than one treaty in their lives. Gain tempts to the first breach of faith, and almost always presents itself, as in all other ill acts, sacrileges, murders, rebellions, treasons, as being undertaken for some kind of advantage; but this first gain has infinite mischievous consequences, throwing this prince out of all correspondence and negotiation, by this example of infidelity. Soliman, of the Ottoman race, a race not very solicitous of keeping their words or compacts, when, in my infancy he made his army land at Otranto, being informed that Mercurino de' Gratinare, and the inhabitants of Castro were detained prisoners, after having surrendered the place, contrary to the articles of their capitulation, sent orders to have them set at liberty, saying, that having other great enterprises in hand in those parts, the disloyalty, though it carried a show of present utility, would for the future bring on him a disrepute and distrust of infinite prejudice.

Now, for my part, I had rather be troublesome and

[1] It was a saying of Louis XI.

[2] "By how much any one is more subtle and cunning, by so much is he hated and suspected, the opinion of his integrity being lost and gone."—CICERO, *De Off.*, ii. 9.

indiscreet, than a flatterer and a dissembler. I confess that there may be some mixture of pride and obstinacy in keeping myself so upright and open as I do, without any consideration of others; and methinks I am a little too free, where I ought least to be so, and that I grow hot by the opposition of respect; and it may be also, that I suffer myself to follow the propension of my own nature for want of art; using the same liberty, speech and countenance towards great persons, that I bring with me from my own house: I am sensible how much it declines towards incivility and indiscretion: but, besides that I am so bred, I have not a wit supple enough to evade a sudden question, and to escape by some evasion, nor to feign a truth, nor memory enough to retain it so feigned; nor, truly, assurance enough to maintain it, and so play the brave out of weakness. And therefore it is that I abandon myself to candour, always to speak as I think, both by complexion and design, leaving the event to fortune. Aristippus was wont to say,[1] that the principal benefit he had extracted from philosophy was that he spoke freely and openly to all.

Memory is a faculty of wonderful use, and without which the judgment can very hardly perform its office: for my part I have none at all. What any one will propound to me, he must do it piecemeal, for to answer a speech consisting of several heads I am not able. I could not receive a commission by word of mouth, without a note-book. And when I have a speech of consequence to make, if it be long, I am reduced to the miserable necessity of getting by heart word for word, what I am to say; I should otherwise have neither method nor assurance, being in fear that my memory would play me a slippery trick. But this way is no less difficult to me than the other; I must have three hours to learn three verses. And besides, in a work of a man's own, the liberty and authority of altering the order, of changing a word, incessantly varying the matter, makes it harder to stick in the memory of the author. The more I mistrust it the worse it is; it serves me best by chance; I must solicit it negligently; for if I press it, 'tis confused, and after it once begins to stagger, the more I sound it,

[1] Diogenes Laertius, ii. 68.

the more it is perplexed; it serves me at its own hour, not at mine.

And the same defect I find in my memory, I find also in several other parts. I fly command, obligation, and constraint; that which I can otherwise naturally and easily do, if I impose it upon myself by an express and strict injunction, I cannot do it. Even the members of my body, which have a more particular jurisdiction of their own, sometimes refuse to obey me, if I enjoin them a necessary service at a certain hour. This tyrannical and compulsive appointment baffles them; they shrink up either through fear or spite, and fall into a trance. Being once in a place where it is looked upon as the greatest discourtesy imaginable not to pledge those who drink to you, though I had there all liberty allowed me, I tried to play the good fellow, out of respect to the ladies who were there, according to the custom of the country; but there was sport enough; for this threatening and preparation, that I was to force myself contrary to my custom and inclination, so stopped my throat that I could not swallow one drop, and was deprived of drinking so much as with my meat; I found myself gorged, and my thirst quenched by the quantity of drink that my imagination had swallowed. This effect is most manifest in such as have the most vehement and powerful imagination: but it is natural, notwithstanding, and there is no one who does not in some measure feel it. They offered an excellent archer, condemned to die, to save his life, if he would show some notable proof of his art, but he refused to try, fearing lest the too great contention of his will should make him shoot wide, and that instead of saving his life, he should also lose the reputation he had got of being a good marksman. A man who thinks of something else, will not fail to take over and over again the same number and measure of steps, even to an inch, in the place where he walks: but if he make it his business to measure and count them, he will find that what he did by nature and accident, he cannot so exactly do by design.

My library, which is of the best sort of country libraries, is situated in a corner of my house; if anything comes into my head that I have a mind to look at or to write there,

lest I should forget it in but going across the court, I am fain to commit it to the memory of some other. If I venture in speaking to digress never so little from my subject, I am infallibly lost, which is the reason that I keep myself, in discourse, strictly close. I am forced to call the men who serve me either by the names of their offices or their country; for names are very hard for me to remember. I can tell, indeed, that there are three syllables, that it has a harsh sound, and that it begins or ends with such a letter, but that's all: and if I should live long, I do not doubt but I should forget my own name, as some others have done. Messala Corvinus was two years without any trace of memory, which is also said of Georgius Trapezuntius. For my own interest, I often meditate what a kind of life theirs was, and if, without this faculty, I should have enough left to support me with any manner of ease; and prying narrowly into it, I fear that this privation, if absolute, destroys all the other functions of the soul:

"Plenus rimarum sum, hac atque illac perfluo."[1]

It has befallen me more than once to forget the watch-word I had three hours before given or received, and to forget where I had hidden my purse; whatever Cicero is pleased to say,[2] I help myself to lose what I have a particular care to lock safe up. "Memoria certe non modo Philosophiam, sed omnis vitæ usum, omnesque artes, una maxime continet."[3] Memory is the receptacle and case of science: and therefore mine being so treacherous, if I know little, I cannot much complain. I know, in general, the names of the arts, and of what they treat, but nothing more. I turn over books; I do not study them. What I retain I no longer recognise as another's; 'tis only what my judgment has made its advantage of, the discourses and imaginations in which it has been instructed: the author, place, words, and other circumstances, I imme-

[1] "I'm full of chinks, and leak out every way."—TER., *Eunuchus*, ii. 2, 23.

[2] De Senectute, c. 7.

[3] "It is certain that memory contains not only philosophy, but all the arts and all that appertain to the use of life."—CICERO, *Acad.*, ii. 7.

diately forget; and I am so excellent at forgetting, that I no less forget my own writings and compositions than the rest. I am very often quoted to myself, and am not aware of it. Whoever should inquire of me where I had the verses and examples that I have here huddled together, would puzzle me to tell him, and yet I have not borrowed them but from famous and known authors, not contenting myself that they were rich, if I, moreover, had them not from rich and honourable hands, where there is a concurrence of authority with reason. It is no great wonder if my book run the same fortune that other books do, and if my memory lose what I have written as well as what I have read, and what I give, as well as what I receive.

Beside the defect of memory, I have others which very much contribute to my ignorance; I have a slow and heavy wit, the least cloud stops its progress, so that, for example, I never proposed to it any never so easy a riddle that it could find out; there is not the least idle subtlety that will not gravel me; in games, where wit is required, as chess, draughts, and the like, I understand no more than the common movements. I have a slow and perplexed apprehension, but what it once apprehends, it apprehends well, for the time it retains it. My sight is perfect, entire, and discovers at a very great distance, but is soon weary and heavy at work, which occasions that I cannot read long, but am forced to have one to read to me. The younger Pliny[1] can inform such as have not experimented it themselves, what, and how important, an impediment this is to those who addict themselves to study.

There is no so wretched and coarse a soul, wherein some particular faculty is not seen to shine; no soul so buried in sloth and ignorance, but it will sally at one end or another; and how it comes to pass that a man blind and asleep to everything else, shall be found sprightly, clear, and excellent in some one particular effect, we are to inquire of our masters: but the beautiful souls are they that are universal, open, and ready for all things; if not instructed, at least capable of being so; which I say to accuse my own; for whether it be through infirmity or negligence (and to

[1] Epist., v. 3.

neglect that which lies at our feet, which we have in our hands, and what nearest concerns the use of life, is far from my doctrine) there is not a soul in the world so awkward as mine, and so ignorant of many common things, and such as a man cannot without shame fail to know. I must give some examples.

I was born and bred up in the country, and amongst husbandmen; I have had business and husbandry in my own hands ever since my predecessors, who were lords of the estate I now enjoy, left me to succeed them: and yet I can neither cast accounts, nor reckon my counters: most of our current money I do not know, nor the difference betwixt one grain and another, either growing or in the barn, if it be not too apparent; and scarcely can distinguish between the cabbage and lettuce in my garden. I do not so much as understand the names of the chief instruments of husbandry, nor the most ordinary elements of agriculture, which the very children know; much less the mechanic arts, traffic, merchandise, the variety and nature of fruits, wines and viands, nor how to make a hawk fly, nor to physic a horse or a dog. And, since I must publish my whole shame, 'tis not above a month ago, that I was trapped in my ignorance of the use of leaven to make bread, or to what end it was to keep wine in the vat. They conjectured of old at Athens,[1] an aptitude for the mathematics in him they saw ingeniously bavin up a burthen of brushwood. In earnest, they would draw a quite contrary conclusion from me, for give me the whole provision and necessaries of a kitchen, I should starve. By these features of my confession men may imagine others to my prejudice: but whatever I deliver myself to be, provided it be such as I really am, I have my end; neither will I make any excuse for committing to paper such mean and frivolous things as these: the meanness of the subject compels me to it. They may, if they please, accuse my project, but not my progress: so it is, that without anybody's needing to tell me, I sufficiently see of how little weight and value all this is,

[1] Diogenes Laertius relates this story (ix. 58) of Protagoras, of Abdera, and so does Aulus Gellius, v. 3. Montaigne's memory probably failed him as to the locality.

and the folly of my design: 'tis enough that my judgment does not contradict itself, of which these are the essays.

"Nasutus sis usque licet, sis denique nasus,
Quantum noluerit ferre rogatus Atlas;
Et possis ipsum tu deridere Latinum,
Non potes in nugas dicere plura meas,
Ipse ego quam dixi: quid dentem dente juvabit
Rodere? carne opus est, si satur esse velis.
Ne perdas operam; qui se mirantur, in illos
Virus habe; nos hæc novimus esse nihil."[1]

I am not obliged to refrain from uttering absurdities, provided I am not deceived in them and know them to be such: and to trip knowingly, is so ordinary with me, that I seldom do it otherwise, and rarely trip by chance. 'Tis no great matter to add ridiculous actions to the temerity of my humour, since I cannot ordinarily help supplying it with those that are vicious.

I was present one day at Barleduc,[2] when King Francis II., for a memorial of René king of Sicily, was presented with a portrait he had drawn of himself: why is it not, in like manner, lawful for every one to draw himself with a pen, as he did with a crayon? I will not, therefore, omit this blemish, though very unfit to be published, which is irresolution; a very great defect, and very incommodious in the negotiations of the affairs of the world; in doubtful enterprises, I know not which to choose:

"Ne si, ne no, nel cor mi suona intero."[3]

I can maintain an opinion, but I cannot choose one. By reason that in human things, to what sect soever we incline, many appearances present themselves that confirm us in it (and the philosopher Chrysippus said,[4] that he would of

[1] "Let your nose be as keen as it will, be all nose, and even a nose so great that Atlas will refuse to bear it: if asked, could you even excel Latinus in scoffing; against my trifles you could say no more than I myself have said: then to what end contend tooth against tooth? You must have flesh, if you want to be full; lose not your labour then; cast your venom upon those that admire themselves; I know already that these things are worthless."—MART. xiii. 2.

[2] September 1559.

[3] "My heart does not tell me either yes or no."—PETRARCH.

[4] Diogenes Laertius, vii. 1, 79.

Zeno and Cleanthes, his masters, learn their doctrines only; for, as to proofs and reasons, he should find enough of his own), which way soever I turn, I still furnish myself with causes, and likelihood enough to fix me there; which makes me detain doubt and the liberty of choosing, till occasion presses; and then, to confess the truth, I, for the most part, throw the feather into the wind, as the saying is, and commit myself to the mercy of fortune; a very light inclination and circumstance carries me along with it:

> "Dum in dubio est animus, paulo momento huc atque
> Illuc impellitur."[1]

The uncertainty of my judgment is so equally balanced in most occurrences, that I could willingly refer it to be decided by the chance of a die: and I observe, with great consideration of our human infirmity, the examples that the divine history itself has left us of this custom of referring to fortune and chance the determination of election in doubtful things: "Sors cecidit super Matthiam."[2] Human reason is a two-edged and dangerous sword: observe in the hands of Socrates, her most intimate and familiar friend, how many several points it has. I am thus good for nothing but to follow and suffer myself to be easily carried away with the crowd; I have not confidence enough in my own strength to take upon me to command and lead; I am very glad to find the way beaten before me by others. If I must run the hazard of an uncertain choice, I am rather willing to have it under such a one as is more confident in his opinions than I am in mine, whose ground and foundation I find to be very slippery and unsure.

Yet, I do not easily change, by reason that I discern the same weakness in contrary opinions: "Ipsa consuetudo assentiendi periculosa esse videtur, et lubrica;"[3] especially in political affairs, there is a large field open for changes and contestation:

[1] "The mind being in doubt, in short time is driven this way and that."—TERENCE, *Andr.*, i. 6, 32.

[2] "The lot fell upon Matthew."—*Acts* i. 26.

[3] "The very custom of assenting seems to be dangerous and slippery."—CICERO, *Acad.*, ii. 21.

"Justa pari premitur veluti cum pondere libra,
Prona, nec hac plus parte sedet, nec surgit ab illa." [1]

Macchiavelli's writings, for example, were solid enough for the subject, yet were they easy enough to be controverted; and they who have taken up the cudgels against him, have left as great a facility of controverting theirs; there was never wanting in that kind of argument, replies and replies upon replies, and as infinite a contexture of debates, as our wrangling lawyers have extended in favour of long suits:

"Cædimur, et totidem plagis consumimus hostem;" [2]

the reasons having little other foundation than experience, and the variety of human events presenting us with infinite examples of all sorts of forms. An understanding person of our times says: That whoever would, in contradiction to our almanacs, write cold where they say hot, and wet where they say dry, and always put the contrary to what they foretell; if he were to lay a wager, he would not care which side he took, excepting where no uncertainty could fall out, as to promise excessive heats at Christmas, or extremity of cold at Midsummer. I have the same opinion of these political controversies; be on which side you will, you have as fair a game to play as your adversary, provided you do not proceed so far as to jostle principles that are too manifest to be disputed. And yet, in my conceit, in public affairs, there is no government so ill, provided it be ancient and has been constant, that is not better than change and alteration. Our manners are infinitely corrupt, and wonderfully incline to the worse; of our laws and customs there are many that are barbarous and monstrous: nevertheless, by reason of the difficulty of reformation, and the danger of stirring things, if I could put something under to stop the wheel, and keep it where it is, I would do it with all my heart:

[1] "As a just balance pressed with equal weight, neither dips nor rises on either side."—TIBULLUS, iv. 41.

[2] "It is a fight wherein we exhaust each other by mutual wounds."—HORACE, *Epist.* ii. 2, 97.

"Numquam adeo fœdis, adeoque pudendis
Utimur exemplis, ut non pejora supersint." [1]

The worst thing I find in our state is instability, and that our laws, no more than our clothes, cannot settle in any certain form. It is very easy to accuse a government of imperfection, for all mortal things are full of it: it is very easy to beget in a people a contempt of ancient observances; never any man undertook it but he did it; but to establish a better regimen in the stead of that which a man has overthrown, many who have attempted it have foundered. I very little consult my prudence in my conduct; I am willing to let it be guided by the public rule. Happy the people who do what they are commanded, better than they who command, without tormenting themselves as to the causes; who suffer themselves gently to roll after the celestial revolution! Obedience is never pure nor calm in him who reasons and disputes.

In fine, to return to myself: the only thing by which I esteem myself to be something, is that wherein never any man thought himself to be defective; my recommendation is vulgar and common, for who ever thought he wanted sense? It would be a proposition that would imply a contradiction in itself; 'tis a disease that never is where it is discerned; 'tis tenacious and strong, but what the first ray of the patient's sight nevertheless pierces through and disperses, as the beams of the sun do thick and obscure mists: to accuse one's self would be to excuse in this case, and to condemn, to absolve. There never was porter or the silliest girl, that did not think they had sense enough to do their business. We easily enough confess in others an advantage of courage, strength, experience, activity, and beauty; but an advantage in judgment we yield to none; and the reasons that proceed simply from the natural conclusions of others, we think, if we had but turned our thoughts that way, we should ourselves have found out as well as they. Knowledge, style, and such parts as we see in others' works, we are soon aware of, if they excel our own: but for the simple products of the understanding, every one thinks

[1] "The examples we produce, are not so shameful and foul but that far worse remain behind."—JUVENAL, viii. 183.

he could have found out the like in himself, and is hardly sensible of the weight and difficulty, if not (and then with much ado), in an extreme and incomparable distance. And whoever should be able clearly to discern the height of another's judgment, would be also able to raise his own to the same pitch. So that it is a sort of exercise, from which a man is to expect very little praise; a kind of composition of small repute. And, besides, for whom do you write? The learned, to whom the authority appertains of judging books, know no other value but that of learning, and allow of no other proceeding of wit but that of erudition and art: if you have mistaken one of the Scipios for another, what is all the rest you have to say worth? Whoever is ignorant of Aristotle, according to their rule, is in some sort ignorant of himself; vulgar souls cannot discern the grace and force of a lofty and delicate style. Now these two sorts of men take up the world. The third sort into whose hands you fall, of souls that are regular and strong of themselves, is so rare, that it justly has neither name nor place amongst us; and 'tis so much time lost to aspire unto it, or to endeavour to please it.

'Tis commonly said that the justest portion nature has given us of her favours, is that of sense; for there is no one who is not contented with his share: is it not reason? whoever should see beyond that, would see beyond his sight. I think my opinions are good and sound, but who does not think the same of his own? One of the best proofs I have that mine are so, is the small esteem I have of myself; for had they not been very well assured, they would easily have suffered themselves to have been deceived by the peculiar affection I have to myself, as one that place it almost wholly in myself, and do not let much run out. All that others distribute amongst an infinite number of friends and acquaintance, to their glory and grandeur, I dedicate to the repose of my own mind and to myself; that which escapes thence is not properly by my direction:

"Mihi nempe valere et vivere doctus."[1]

Now I find my opinions very bold and constant in con-

1 "To live and to do well for myself."—LUCRETIUS, v. 959.

demning my own imperfection. And, to say the truth, 'tis a subject upon which I exercise my judgment, as much as upon any other. The world looks always opposite; I turn my sight inwards, and there fix and employ it. I have no other business but myself, I am eternally meditating upon myself, considering and tasting myself. Other men's thoughts are ever wandering abroad, if they will but see it; they are still going forward;

"Nemo in sese tentat descendere;" [1]

for my part, I circulate in myself. This capacity of trying the truth, whatever it be, in myself, and this free humour of not over easily subjecting my belief, I owe principally to myself; for the strongest and most general imaginations I have are those that, as a man may say, were born with me; they are natural and entirely my own. I produced them crude and simple, with a strong and bold production, but a little troubled and imperfect; I have since established and fortified them with the authority of others and the sound examples of the ancients, whom I have found of the same judgment: they have given me faster hold, and a more manifest fruition and possession of that I had before embraced. The reputation that every one pretends to of vivacity and promptness of wit, I seek in regularity; the glory they pretend to from a striking and signal action, or some particular excellence, I claim from order, correspondence, and tranquillity of opinions and manners: "Omnino si quidquam est decorum, nihil est profecto magis, quam æquabilitas universæ vitæ, tum singularum actionum, quam conservare non possis, si, aliorum naturam imitans, omittas tuam." [2]

Here, then, you see to what degree I find myself guilty of this first part, that I said was the vice of presumption. As to the second, which consists in not having a sufficient esteem for others, I know not whether or no I can so well

[1] "No one thinks of descending into himself."—PERSIUS, iv. 23.

[2] "If anything be entirely decorous, nothing certainly can be more so than an equability in the whole life, and in every particular action of it; which thou canst not possibly observe and keep, if imitating other men's natures thou layest aside thy own."—CICERO, *De Offic.*, i. 31.

excuse myself; but whatever comes on't I am resolved to speak the truth. And whether, peradventure, it be that the continual frequentation I have had with the humours of the ancients, and the idea of those great souls of past ages, put me out of taste both with others and myself, or that, in truth, the age we live in produces but very indifferent things, yet so it is that I see nothing worthy of any great admiration. Neither, indeed, have I so great an intimacy with many men as is requisite to make a right judgment of them; and those with whom my condition makes me the most frequent, are, for the most part, men who have little care of the culture of the soul, but that look upon honour as the sum of all blessings, and valour as the height of all perfection.

What I see that is fine in others I very readily commend and esteem: nay, I often say more in their commendation than I think they really deserve, and give myself so far leave to lie, for I cannot invent a false subject: my testimony is never wanting to my friends in what I conceive deserves praise, and where a foot is due I am willing to give them a foot and a half; but to attribute to them qualities that they have not, I cannot do it, nor openly defend their imperfections. Nay, I frankly give my very enemies their due testimony of honour; my affection alters, my judgment does not, and I never confound my animosity with other circumstances that are foreign to it; and I am so jealous of the liberty of my judgment that I can very hardly part with it for any passion whatever. I do myself a greater injury in lying than I do him of whom I tell a lie. This commendable and generous custom is observed of the Persian nation, that they spoke of their mortal enemies and with whom they were at deadly war, as honourably and justly as their virtues deserved.

I know men enough that have several fine parts; one wit, another courage, another address, another conscience, another language, one, one science, another, another; but a generally great man, and who has all these brave parts together, or any one of them to such a degree of excellence that we should admire him or compare him with those we honour of times past, my fortune never brought me acquainted with; and the greatest I ever knew, I mean for

the natural parts of the soul, was Etienne De la Boetie; his was a full soul indeed, and that had every way a beautiful aspect: a soul of the old stamp, and that had produced great effects had his fortune been so pleased, having added much to those great natural parts by learning and study.

But how it comes to pass I know not, and yet it is certainly so, there is as much vanity and weakness of judgment in those who profess the greatest abilities, who take upon them learned callings and bookish employments as in any other sort of men whatever; either because more is required and expected from them, and that common defects are excusable in them, or because the opinion they have of their own learning makes them more bold to expose and lay themselves too open, by which they lose and betray themselves. As an artificer more manifests his want of skill in a rich matter he has in hand, if he disgrace the work by ill handling and contrary to the rules required, than in a matter of less value; and men are more displeased at a disproportion in a statue of gold than in one of plaster; so do these when they advance things that in themselves and in their place would be good; for they make use of them without discretion, honouring their memories at the expense of their understandings, and making themselves ridiculous by honouring Cicero, Galen, Ulpian, and St. Jerome alike.

I willingly fall again into the discourse of the vanity of our education, the end of which is not to render us good and wise, but learned, and she has obtained it. She has not taught us to follow and embrace virtue and prudence, but she has imprinted in us their derivation and etymology; we know how to decline Virtue, if we know not how to love it; if we do not know what prudence is really and in effect, and by experience, we have it however by jargon and heart: we are not content to know the extraction, kindred, and alliances of our neighbours; we desire, moreover, to have them our friends and to establish a correspondence and intelligence with them; but this education of ours has taught us definitions, divisions, and partitions of virtue, as so many surnames and branches of a genealogy, without any further care of establishing any familiarity or intimacy betwixt her and us. It has culled out for our initiatory

instruction not such books as contain the soundest and truest opinions, but those that speak the best Greek and Latin, and by their fine words has instilled into our fancy the vainest humours of antiquity.

A good education alters the judgment and manners; as it happened to Polemon,[1] a lewd and debauched young Greek, who going by chance to hear one of Xenocrates' lectures, did not only observe the eloquence and learning of the reader, and not only brought away the knowledge of some fine matter, but a more manifest and a more solid profit, which was the sudden change and reformation of his former life. Whoever found such an effect of our discipline?

> "Faciasne, quod olim
> Mutatus Polemon? ponas insignia morbi
> Fasciolas, cubital, focalia; potus ut ille
> Dicitur ex collo furtim carpsisse coronas,
> Postquam est impransi correptus voce magistri."[2]

That seems to me to be the least contemptible condition of men, which by its plainness and simplicity is seated in the lowest degree, and invites us to a more regular course. I find the rude manners and language of country people commonly better suited to the rule and prescription of true philosophy, than those of our philosophers themselves: "Plus sapit vulgus, quia tantum, quantum opus est, sapit."[3]

The most remarkable men, as I have judged by outward appearance (for to judge of them according to my own method, I must penetrate a great deal deeper) for soldiers and military conduct, were the Duke of Guise, who died at Orleans, and the late Marshal Strozzi; and for men of great ability and no common virtue, Olivier, and De l'Hospital, chancellors of France. Poetry, too, in my

[1] Diogenes Laertius, Life of Polemon.

[2] "Will you do what reformed Polemon did of old? will you lay aside the joys of your disease, your garters, capuchin, muffler, as he in his cups is said to have secretly torn off his garlands from his neck, when he heard what that temperate teacher said."—HORACE, *Sat.* ii. 3, 253.

[3] "The vulgar are so much the wiser, because they only know what is needful for them to know."—LACTANTIUS, *Instit. Div.*, iii. 5.

opinion, has flourished in this age of ours; we have abundance of very good artificers in the trade; D'Aurat, Beza, Buchanan, L'Hospital, Montdoré, Turnebus: as to the French poets, I believe they raised their art to the highest pitch to which it can ever arrive; and in those parts of it wherein Ronsard and du Bellay excel, I find them little inferior to the ancient perfection. Adrian Turnebus knew more, and what he did know, better than any man of his time, or long before him. The lives of the last Duke of Alva, and of our Constable de Montmorency, were both of them great and noble, and that had many rare resemblances of fortune; but the beauty and glory of the death of the last, in the sight of Paris and of his king, in their service, against his nearest relations, at the head of an army through his conduct victorious, and by a sudden stroke, in so extreme old age, merits methinks to be recorded amongst the most remarkable events of our times. As also the constant goodness, sweetness of manners, and conscientious facility of Monsieur de la Noue, in so great an injustice of armed parties (the true school of treason, inhumanity, and robbery), wherein he always kept up the reputation of a great and experienced captain.

I have taken a delight to publish in several places the hopes I have of Marie de Gournay le Jars, my adopted daughter;[1] and certainly beloved by me with more than a paternal love, and enveloped in my solitude and retirement as one of the best parts of my own being: I have no longer regard to anything in this world but her. And if a man may presage from her youth, her soul will one day be capable of very great things; and amongst others, of the perfection of that sacred friendship, to which we do not read that any of her sex could ever yet arrive; the sincerity and solidity of her manners are already sufficient for it, and her affection towards me more than superabundant, and such, in short, as that there is nothing more to be wished, if not that the apprehension she has of my end, being now five and fifty years old, might not so much afflict her. The judgment she made of my first Essays,

[1] She was adopted by him in 1588. See Leon Feugere's Mademoiselle de Gournay, Étude sur sa vie et ses ouvrages.

being a woman, so young, and in this age, and alone in her own country; and the famous vehemence wherewith she loved me, and desired my acquaintance solely from the esteem she had thence of me, before she ever saw my face, is an incident very worthy of consideration.

Other virtues have had little or no credit in this age; but valour is become popular by our civil wars; and in this, we have souls brave even to perfection, and in so great number that the choice is impossible to be made.

This is all of extraordinary and not common grandeur that has hitherto arrived at my knowledge.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OF GIVING THE LIE.

WELL, but some one will say to me, this design of making a man's self the subject of his writing, were indeed excusable in rare and famous men, who by their reputation had given others a curiosity to be fully informed of them. It is most true, I confess and know very well, that a mechanic will scarce lift his eye from his work to look at an ordinary man, whereas a man will forsake his business and his shop to stare at an eminent person when he comes into a town. It misbecomes any other to give his own character, but him who has qualities worthy of imitation, and whose life and opinions may serve for example: Cæsar and Xenophon had a just and solid foundation whereon to found their narrations, in the greatness of their own performances; and it were to be wished that we had the journals of Alexander the Great, the commentaries that Augustus, Cato, Sylla, Brutus, and others left of their actions: of such persons men love and contemplate the very statues even in copper and marble.

This remonstrance is very true; but it very little concerns me:

> "Non recito cuiquam, nisi amicis, idque rogatus;
> Non ubivis, coramve quibuslibet, in medio qui
> Scripta foro recitant, sunt multi, quique lavantes."[1]

I do not here form a statue to erect in the great square of a city, in a church, or any public place:

> "Non equidem hoc studeo, bullatis ut mihi nugis,
> Pagina turgescat . . .
> Secreti loquimur:"[2]

'tis for some corner of a library, or to entertain a neighbour, a kinsman, a friend, who has a mind to renew his acquaintance and familiarity with me in this image of myself. Others have been encouraged to speak of themselves, because they found the subject worthy and rich; I, on the contrary, am the bolder, by reason the subject is so poor and sterile that I cannot be suspected of ostentation. I judge freely of the actions of others; I give little of my own to judge of, because they are nothing: I do not find so much good in myself, that I cannot tell it without blushing.

What contentment would it not be to me to hear any one thus relate to me the manners, faces, countenances, the ordinary words and fortunes of my ancestors? how attentively should I listen to it! In earnest, it would be evil nature to despise so much as the pictures of our friend and predecessors, the fashion of their clothes and arms. I preserve their writing, seal, and a particular sword they wore, and have not thrown the long staves my father used to carry in his hand, out of my closet: "Paterna vestis, et annulus, tanto charior est posteris, quanto erga parentes major affectus."[3] If my posterity, nevertheless, shall be of another mind, I shall be revenged on them; for they cannot care less for me, than I shall then do for them.

[1] "I repeat my poems only to my friends, and when asked to do so; not before every one, and everywhere; there are plenty of reciters in the open market-place and at the baths."—HORACE, *Sat.* i. 4, 73. Montaigne has substituted in the text *rogatus* for *coactus*.

[2] "I study not to make my pages swell with empty trifles; you and I are talking in private."—PERSIUS, *Sat.* v. 19.

[3] "A father's garment and ring is by so much dearer to his posterity, as they had the greater affection towards him."—ST. AUG., *De Civit. Dei*, i.

All the traffic that I have in this with the public, is that I borrow their utensils of writing, which are more easy and most at hand; and in recompense shall, peradventure, keep a pound of butter in the market from melting in the sun:

"Ne toga cordyllis, ne penula desit olivis;"[1]

"Et laxas scombris sæpe dabo tunicas;"[2]

And though nobody should read me, have I lost my time in entertaining myself so many idle hours, in so pleasing and useful thoughts? In moulding this figure upon myself, I have been so often constrained to temper and compose myself in a right posture, that the copy is truly taken, and has in some sort formed itself; painting myself for others, I represent myself in a better colouring than my own natural complexion. I have no more made my book, than my book has made me: 'tis a book consubstantial with the author, of a peculiar design, a member of my life, and whose business is not designed for others, as that of all other books is. In giving myself so continual and so exact an account of myself, have I lost my time? For they who sometimes cursorily survey themselves only, do not so strictly examine themselves, nor penetrate so deep, as he who makes it his business, his study, and his employment, who intends a lasting record, with all his fidelity, and with all his force. The most delicious pleasures digested within, avoid leaving any trace of themselves, and avoid the sight not only of the people, but of any other person. How often has this work diverted me from troublesome thoughts? and all that are frivolous should be reputed so. Nature has presented us with a large faculty of entertaining ourselves alone; and often calls us to it, to teach us that we owe ourselves in part to society, but chiefly and mostly to ourselves. That I may habituate my fancy even to meditate in some method and to some end, and to keep it from losing itself and roving at random, 'tis but to give to body and to record all the little thoughts that present themselves to it. I give ear to my whimsies, because I am to record them.

[1] "I shall furnish olives and plaice with a coat, and cover mackerel with a garment."—MARTIAL, xiii. 1, 1.

[2] Catullus, xc. 14, 8.

It often falls out, that being displeased at some action that civility and reason will not permit me openly to reprove, I here disgorge myself, not without design of public instruction: and also these poetical lashes—

> "Zon sur l'œil, zon sur le groin,
> Zon sur le dos du sagoin," [1] —

imprint themselves better upon paper than upon the flesh. What if I listen to books a little more attentively than ordinary, since I watch if I can purloin anything that may adorn or support my own? I have not at all studied to make a book, but I have in some sort studied because I had made it; if it be studying to scratch and pinch now one author, and then another, either by the head or foot, not with any design to form opinions from them, but to assist, second, and fortify those I already have embraced.

But whom shall we believe in the report he makes of himself in so corrupt an age? considering there are so few, if any at all, whom we can believe when speaking of others, where there is less interest to lie. The first thing done in the corruption of manners is banishing truth; for, as Pindar says,[2] to be true is the beginning of a great virtue, and the first article that Plato requires in the governor of his Republic. The truth of these days is not that which really is, but what every man persuades another man to believe; as we generally give the name of money not only to pieces of the just alloy, but even to the false also, if they will pass. Our nation has long been reproached with this vice; for Salvianus Massiliensis, who lived in the time of the Emperor Valentinian, says that lying and forswearing themselves is with the French not a vice, but a way of speaking.[3] He who would enhance this testimony, might say that it is now a virtue in them; men form and fashion themselves to it as to an exercise of honour; for dissimulation is one of the most notable qualities of this age.

I have often considered whence this custom that we so religiously observe should spring, of being more highly

[1] "A slap on his eye, a slap on his snout, a slap on Sagoin' back."—MAROT. *Fripelippes, Valet de Marot à Sagoin.*

[2] Clement of Alexandria, Strom., vi. 10; Stobæus, Serm., xi.

[3] Salvianus, De Gubernatione Dei, i. 14.

offended with the reproach of a vice so familiar to us than with any other, and that it should be the highest insult that can in words be done us to reproach us with a lie. Upon examination, I find that it is natural most to defend the defects with which we are most tainted. It seems as if by resenting and being moved at the accusation, we in some sort acquit ourselves of the fault; though we have it in effect, we condemn it in outward appearance. May it not also be that this reproach seems to imply cowardice and feebleness of heart? of which can there be a more manifest sign than to eat a man's own words—nay, to lie against a man's own knowledge? Lying is a base vice; a vice that one of the ancients portrays in the most odious colours when he says, "that it is to manifest a contempt of God, and withal a fear of men."[1] It is not possible more fully to represent the horror, baseness, and irregularity of it; for what can a man imagine more hateful and contemptible than to be a coward towards men, and valiant against his Maker? Our intelligence being by no other way communicable to one another but by a particular word, he who falsifies that betrays public society. 'Tis the only way by which we communicate our thoughts and wills; 'tis the interpreter of the soul, and if it deceive us, we no longer know nor have further tie upon one another; if that deceive us, it breaks all our correspondence, and dissolves all the ties of government. Certain nations of the newly discovered Indies (I need not give them names, seeing they are no more; for, by wonderful and unheard-of example, the desolation of that conquest has extended to the utter abolition of names and the ancient knowledge of places) offered to their gods human blood, but only such as was drawn from the tongue and ears, to expiate for the sin of lying, as well heard as pronounced. The good fellow of Greece[2] was wont to say that children were amused with toys and men with words.

As to the diverse usage of giving the lie, and the laws of honour in that case, and the alterations they have received, I shall defer saying what I know of them to another time, and shall learn, if I can, in the meanwhile, at what time

[1] Plutarch, Life of Lysander, c. 4.
[2] Lysander. Id., ib.

the custom took beginning of so exactly weighing and measuring words, and of making our honour so interested in them; for it is easy to judge that it was not anciently amongst the Greeks and Romans; and I have often thought it strange to see them rail at and give one another the lie without any further quarrel. Their laws of duty steered some other course than ours. Cæsar is sometimes called thief, and sometimes drunkard, to his teeth.[1] We see the liberty of invectives they practised upon one another, I mean the greatest chiefs of war of both nations, where words are only revenged with words, and never proceed any farther.

CHAPTER XIX.

OF LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.

'Tis usual to see good intentions, if carried on without moderation, push men on to very vicious effects, In this dispute which has at this time engaged France in a civil war, the better and the soundest cause, no doubt, is that which maintains the ancient religion and government of the kingdom. Nevertheless, amongst the good men of that party (for I do not speak of those who only make a pretence of it, either to execute their own particular revenges or to gratify their avarice, or to conciliate the favour of princes, but of those who engage in the quarrel out of true zeal to religion and a holy desire to maintain the peace and government of their country), of these, I say, we see many whom passion transports beyond the bounds of reason, and sometimes inspires with counsels that are unjust and violent, and, moreover, rash.

It is certain that in those first times, when our religion began to gain authority with the laws, zeal armed many against all sorts of Pagan books, by which the learned suffered an exceeding great loss, a disorder that I conceive to

[1] Plutarch, Pompey, c. 16; Cato of Utica, c. 7.

have done more prejudice to letters than all the flames of the barbarians. Of this Cornelius Tacitus is a very good testimony; for though the Emperor Tacitus,[1] his kinsman, had, by express order, furnished all the libraries in the world with it, nevertheless one entire copy could not escape the curious examination of those who desired to abolish it for only five or six idle clauses that were contrary to our belief.

They had also the trick easily to lend undue praises to all the emperors who did anything for us, and universally to condemn all the actions of those who were our adversaries as is evidently manifest in the Emperor Julian, surnamed the Apostate,[2] who was, in truth, a very great and rare man, a man in whose soul philosophy was imprinted in the best characters, by which he professed to govern all his actions; and, in truth, there is no sort of virtue of which he has not left behind him very notable examples: in chastity (of which the whole of his life gave manifest proof) we read the same of him, that was said of Alexander and Scipio, that being in the flower of his age, for he was slain by the Parthians at one and thirty, of a great many very beautiful captives, he would not so much as look upon one.[3] As to his justice, he took himself the pains to hear the parties, and although he would out of curiosity inquire what religion they were of, nevertheless, the hatred he had to ours never gave any counterpoise to the balance. He made himself several good laws, and cut off a great part of the subsidies and taxes imposed and levied by his predecessors.[4]

We have two good historians who were eye-witnesses of his actions: one of whom, Marcellinus, in several places of his history,[5] sharply reproves an edict of his whereby he

[1] Vopiscus, *in vita*, c. 10.

[2] The character of the Emperor Julian was censured, when Montaigne was at Rome, in 1581, by the Master of the Sacred Palace, who, however, as Montaigne tells us in his Journey (ii. 35), referred it to his conscience to alter what he should think in bad taste. This Montaigne did not do, and this chapter supplied Voltaire with the greater part of the praises he bestowed upon the Emperor.—(Leclerc.)

[3] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxiv. 8.

[4] Idem, xxii. 10; xxv. 5, 6. [5] Idem, xxii. 10, etc.

interdicted all Christians rhetoricians and grammarians to keep school, or to teach, and says he could wish that act of his had been buried in silence: it is probable that, had he done any more severe thing against us, he, so affectionate as he was to our party, would not have passed it over in silence. He was, indeed, sharp against us; but yet no cruel enemy; for our own people[1] tell this story of him, that one day, walking about the city of Chalcedon, Maris, bishop of the place, was so bold as to tell him that he was impious, and an enemy to Christ, at which, say they, therein affecting a philosophical patience, he was no further moved than to reply, "Go, poor wretch, and lament the loss of thy eyes," to which the bishop replied again, "I thank Jesus Christ for taking away my sight, that I may not see thy impudent face." But this action of his savours nothing of the cruelty that he is said to have exercised towards us. "He was," says Eutropius,[2] my other witness, "an enemy to Christianity, but without putting his hand to blood." And, to return to his justice, there is nothing in that whereof he can be accused, the severity excepted he practised in the beginning of his reign against those who had followed the party of Constantius, his predecessor.[3] As to his sobriety, he lived always a soldier's kind of life; and kept a table in the most profound peace, like one that prepared and inured himself to the austerities of war.[4] His vigilance was such, that he divided the night into three or four parts, of which the least was dedicated to sleep; the rest was spent either in visiting the state of his army and guards in person, or in study;[5] for, amongst other rare qualities, he was very excellent in all sorts of learning. 'Tis said of Alexander the Great, that being in bed, for fear lest sleep should divert him from his thoughts and studies, he had always a basin set by his bedside, and held one of his hands out with a ball of copper in it, to the end, that, beginning to fall asleep, and his fingers leaving their hold, the ball, by falling into the basin, might awake him. But the other had his soul so bent upon what he had a mind to do, and so little disturbed with fumes by reason of his singular abstinence, that he had no need of any such inven-

[1] Sozomenus, Hist. Eccl., v. 4. [2] x. 8.
[3] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxii. 2. [4] Idem, xvi. 2. [5] Id., ib.

tion. As to his military experience, he was excellent in all the qualities of a great captain, as it was likely he should, being almost all his life in a continual exercise of war, and most of that time with us in France, against the Germans and Franks: we hardly read of any man who ever saw more dangers, or who made more frequent proofs of his personal valour.

His death has something in it parallel with that of Epaminondas, for he was wounded with an arrow, and tried to pull it out, and had done so, but that, being edged, it cut and disabled his hand. He incessantly called out, that they should carry him again into the heat of the battle to encourage his soldiers, who very bravely disputed the fight without him, till night parted the armies.[1] He stood obliged to his philosophy for the singular contempt he had for his life, and all human things. He had a firm belief of the immortality of the soul.

In matter of religion, he was wrong throughout; and was surnamed the Apostate for having relinquished ours: though, methinks, 'tis more likely that he had never thoroughly embraced it, but had dissembled out of obedience to the laws, till he came to the empire. He was, in his own so superstitious, that he was laughed at for it by those of his own time, of the same opinion, who jeeringly said, that had he got the victory over the Parthians, he had destroyed the breed of oxen in the world to supply his sacrifices.[2] He was, moreover, besotted with the art of divination, and gave authority to all sorts of predictions. He said, amongst other things, at his death, that he was obliged to the gods, and thanked them, in that they would not cut him off by surprise, having long before advertised him of the place and hour of his death, nor by a mean and unmanly death, more becoming lazy and delicate people; nor by a death that was languishing, long, and painful; and that they had thought him worthy to die after that noble manner, in the progress of his victories, in the flower of his glory.[3] He had a vision like that of Marcus Brutus, that first threatened him in Gaul, and afterward appeared to him in Persia just before his death.[4] These words that

[1] Ammianus Marcellinus, xxv. 3.
[2] Idem, xxv. 6.
[3] Idem, xxiv. 4
[4] Idem, xx. 5; xxv. 2.

some make him say when he felt himself wounded: "Thou hast overcome, Nazarene;"[1] or as others, "Content thyself, Nazarene;" would hardly have been omitted, had they been believed, by my witnesses who, being present in the army, have set down to the least motions and words of his end; no more than certain other miracles that are reported about it.

And to return to my subject, he long nourished, says Marcellinus,[2] paganism in his heart; but all his army being Christians, he durst not own it. But in the end, seeing himself strong enough to dare to discover himself, he caused the temples of the gods to be thrown open, and did his utmost to set on foot and to encourage idolatry. Which the better to effect, having at Constantinople found the people disunited, and also the prelates of the church divided amongst themselves, having convened them all before him, he earnestly admonished them to calm those civil dissensions, and that every one might freely, and without fear, follow his own religion.[3] Which he the more sedulously solicited, in hope that this licence would augment the schisms and factions of their division, and hinder the people from reuniting, and consequently fortifying themselves against him by their unanimous intelligence and concord; having experienced by the cruelty of some Christians, that there is no beast in the world so much to be feared by man as man; these are very nearly his words.

Wherein this is very worthy of consideration, that the Emperor Julian made use of the same receipt of liberty of conscience to inflame the civil dissensions, that our kings do to extinguish them. So that a man may say on one side, that to give the people the reins to entertain every man his own opinion, is to scatter and sow division, and, as it were, to lend a hand to augment it, there being no legal impediment or restraint to stop or hinder their career; but, on the other side, a man may also say, that to give the people the reins to entertain every man his own opinion, is to mollify and appease them by facility and toleration, and to dull the point which is whetted and made sharper by

[1] Theodoretus, Hist. Eccl., iii. 20. [2] Marcellinus, xxi. 2.
[3] Idem, xxii. 3.

singularity, novelty, and difficulty: and I think it is better for the honour of the devotion of our kings, that not having been able to do what they would, they have made a show of being willing to do what they could.

CHAPTER XX.

THAT WE TASTE NOTHING PURE.

THE imbecility of our condition is such that things cannot, in their natural simplicity and purity, fall into our use; the elements that we enjoy are changed, and so 'tis with metals; and gold must be debased with some other matter to fit it for our service. Neither has virtue, so simple as that which Aristo, Pyrrho, and also the Stoics, made the End of life; nor the Cyrenaic and Aristippic pleasure, been without mixture useful to it. Of the pleasure and goods that we enjoy, there is not one exempt from some mixture of ill and inconvenience:

> "Medio de fonte leporum,
> Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angat."[1]

Our extremest pleasure has some air of groaning and complaining in it; would you not say that it is dying of pain? Nay, when we frame the image of it in its full excellence, we stuff it with sickly and painful epithets and qualities, languor, softness, feebleness, faintness, *morbidezza*: a great testimony of their consanguinity and consubstantiality. The most profound joy has more of severity than gaiety in it. The highest and fullest contentment offers more of the grave than of the merry; "Ipsa felicitas, se nisi temperat, premit."[2] Pleasure chews and grinds us; according to the old Greek verse,[3] which says that the gods sell us all the

[1] "In the very source of our pleasure, there is something that is bitter, and that vexes even the flowers."—LUCRETIUS, iv. 1130.

[2] "Even felicity, unless it moderate itself, oppresses."—SENECA, *Ep.* 74.

[3] Epicharmus, in Xenophon, Mem. of Socrates, ii. 1, 20.

goods they give us; that is to say, that they give us nothing pure and perfect, and that we do not purchase but at the price of some evil.

Labour and pleasure, very unlike in nature, associate, nevertheless, by I know not what natural conjunction. Socrates says,[1] that some god tried to mix in one mass and to confound pain and pleasure, but not being able to do it, he bethought him at least, to couple them by the tail. Metrodorus[2] said, that in sorrow there is some mixture of pleasure. I know not whether or no he intended anything else by that saying; but for my part, I am of opinion that there is design, consent, and complacency in giving a man's self up to melancholy. I say, that besides ambition, which may also have a stroke in the business, there is some shadow of delight and delicacy which smiles upon and flatters us even in the very lap of melancholy. Are there not some constitutions that feed upon it?

"Est quædam flere voluptas:"[3]

and one Attalus in Seneca[4] says, that the memory of our lost friends is as grateful to us, as bitterness in wine, when too old, is to the palate—

"Minister vetuli, puer, Falerni
Inger' mi calices amariores"[5] —

and as apples that have a sweet tartness.

Nature discovers this confusion to us; painters hold that the same motions and screwings of the face that serve for weeping, serve for laughter too; and indeed, before the one or the other be finished, do but observe the painter's manner of handling, and you will be in doubt to which of the two the design tends; and the extreme of laughter does, at last bring tears. "Nullum sine auctoramento malum est."[6]

When I imagine man abounding with all the conve-

[1] In Phædo, ii. 1, 20. [2] Seneca, Ep. 99.

[3] "'Tis a certain kind of pleasure to weep."—OVID, *Trist.*, iv. 3, 27.

[4] Ep. 70.

[5] "Boy, when you pour out old Falernian wine, the bitterest put into my bowl."—CATULLUS, xxvii. 1.

[6] "No evil is without its compensation."—SENECA, *Ep.* 69.

niences that are to be desired (let us put the case that all his members were always seized with a pleasure like that of generation, in its most excessive height) I feel him melting under the weight of his delight, and see him utterly unable to support so pure, so continual, and so universal a pleasure. Indeed, he is running away whilst he is there, and naturally makes haste to escape, as from a place where he cannot stand firm, and where he is afraid of sinking.

When I religiously confess myself to myself, I find that the best virtue I have has in it some tincture of vice; and I am afraid that Plato, in his purest virtue (I, who am as sincere and loyal a lover of virtue of that stamp, as any other whatever) if he had listened and laid his ear close to himself, and he did so no doubt, would have heard some jarring sound of human mixture, but faint and only perceptible to himself. Man is wholly and throughout but patch and motley. Even the laws of justice themselves cannot subsist without mixture of injustice; insomuch that Plato says,[1] they undertake to cut off the hydra's head, who pretend to clear the law of all inconveniences. "Omne magnum exemplum habet aliquid ex iniquo, quod contra singulos utilitate publica rependitur,"[2] says Tacitus.

It is likewise true, that for the use of life and the service of public commerce, there may be some excesses in the purity and perspicacity of our minds; that penetrating light has in it too much of subtlety and curiosity: we must a little stupefy and blunt them to render them more obedient to example and practice, and a little veil and obscure them, the better to proportion them to this dark and earthy life. And therefore common and less speculative souls are found to be more proper for and more successful in the management of affairs; and the elevated and exquisite opinions of philosophy unfit for business. This sharp vivacity of soul, and the supple and restless volubility attending it, disturb our negotiations. We are to manage human enterprises more superficially and roughly, and leave a great part to fortune; it is not necessary to

[1] Republic, iv. 5.

[2] "Every great example has in it some mixture of injustice, which recompenses the wrong done to particular men by the public utility."—TACITUS, *Annals*, xiv. 44.

examine affairs with so much subtlety and so deep: a man loses himself in the consideration of so many contrary lustres, and so many various forms; "Volutantibus res inter se pugnantes, obtorpuerant . . . animi." [1]

'Tis what the ancients say of Simonides, that by reason his imagination suggested to him, upon the question King Hiero had put to him [2] (to answer which he had had many days to meditate in), several sharp and subtle considerations, whilst he doubted which was the most likely, he totally despaired of the truth.

He who dives into and in his inquisition comprehends all circumstances and consequences, hinders his election: a little engine well-handled is sufficient for executions, whether of less or greater weight. The best managers are those who can worst give account how they are so; while the greatest talkers, for the most part, do nothing to purpose: I know one of this sort of men, and a most excellent discourser upon all sorts of good husbandry, who has miserably let a hundred thousand livres yearly revenue slip through his hands; I know another who talks, who better advises than any man of his counsel, and there is not in the world a fairer show of soul and understanding than he has; nevertheless, when he comes to the test, his servants find him quite another thing; not to make any mention of his misfortunes.

CHAPTER XXI.

AGAINST IDLENESS.

THE Emperor Vespasian, being sick of the disease whereof he died, did not for all that neglect to inquire after the state of the empire; and even in bed continually despatched very many affairs of great consequence; for which, being

[1] "Whilst they considered of things so indifferent in themselves, they were astonished, and knew not what to do."—LIVY, xxxii. 20.

[2] What God was.—CICERO, *De Nat. Deor.*, i. 22.

reproved by his physician, as a thing prejudicial to his health, "An emperor," said he, "must die standing."[1] A fine saying, in my opinion, and worthy a great prince. The Emperor Adrian since made use of the same words,[2] and kings should be often put in mind of them, to make them know that the great office conferred upon them of the command of so many men, is not an employment of ease; and that there is nothing can so justly disgust a subject, and make him unwilling to expose himself to labour and danger for the service of his prince, than to see him, in the meantime, devoted to his ease and frivolous amusement: and to be solicitous of his preservation who so much neglects that of his people.

Whoever will take upon him to maintain that 'tis better for a prince to carry on his wars by others, than in his own person, fortune will furnish him with examples enough of those whose lieutenants have brought great enterprises to a happy issue, and of those also whose presence has done more hurt than good: but no virtuous and valiant prince, can with patience endure so dishonourable councils. Under colour of saving his head, like the statue of a saint, for the happiness of his kingdom, they degrade him from and declare him incapable of his office, which is military throughout. I know one[3] who had much rather be beaten, than to sleep whilst another fights for him; and who never without jealousy heard of any brave thing done even by his own officers in his absence. And Soliman I. said, with very good reason, in my opinion, that victories obtained without the master were never complete. Much more would he have said that that master ought to blush for shame, to pretend to any share in the honour, having contributed nothing to the work, but his voice and thought; nor even so much as these, considering that in such work as that, the direction and command that deserve honour are only such as are given upon the spot, and in the heat of the business. No pilot performs his office by standing still. The princes of the Ottoman family, the chiefest in the world in military fortune, have warmly embraced this

[1] Suetonius, in vita, c. 24. [2] Spartian, Verus, c. 6.
[3] Probably Henry IV.

opinion, and Bajazet II., with his son, who swerved from it, spending their time in science and other retired employments, gave great blows to their empire: and Amurath III., now reigning, following their example, begins to find the same. Was it not Edward III., king of England, who said this of our Charles V.: "There never was king who so seldom put on his armour, and yet never king who cut me out so much work." He had reason to think it strange, as an effect of chance more than of reason. And let those seek out some other to join with them than me, who will reckon the kings of Castile and Portugal amongst the warlike and magnanimous conquerors, because at the distance of twelve hundred leagues from their lazy abode, by the conduct of their captains, they made themselves masters of both Indies; of which it has to be known if they would have had even the courage to go and in person enjoy them.

The Emperor Julian said yet further, that a philosopher and a brave man ought not so much as to breathe; that is to say, not to allow any more to bodily necessities than what we cannot refuse; keeping the soul and body still intent and busy about honourable, great, and virtuous things. He was ashamed if any one in public saw him spit, or sweat (which is said by some, also, of the Lacedæmonian young men, and which Xenophon says of the Persian)[1] forasmuch as he conceived that exercise, continual labour, and sobriety, ought to have dried up all those superfluities. What Seneca says[2] will not be unfit for this place; which is, that the ancient Romans kept their youth always standing, and taught them nothing that they were to learn sitting.

'Tis a generous desire to wish to die usefully and like a man, but the effect lies not so much in our resolution as in our good fortune; a thousand have proposed to themselves in battle, either to overcome or to die, who have failed both in the one and the other, wounds and imprisonment crossing their design and compelling them to live against their will. There are diseases that overthrow even our desires, and our knowledge. Fortune ought not to second the vanity of the Roman legions, who bound themselves by

[1] Cyrop., i. 2, 16. [2] Ep. 88.

oath, either to overcome or die: "Victor, Marce Fabi, revertar ex acie: si fallo, Jovem patrem, Gradivumque Martem, aliosque iratos invoco deos."[1] The Portuguese say that in a certain place of their conquest of the Indies, they met with soldiers who had condemned themselves, with horrible execrations, to enter into no other composition but either to cause themselves to be slain, or to remain victorious; and had their heads and beards shaved in token of this vow. 'Tis to much purpose for us to hazard ourselves and to be obstinate: it seems as if blows avoided those who present themselves too briskly to them, and do not willingly fall upon those who too willingly seek them, and so defeat them of their design. Such there have been, who, after having tried all ways, not having been able with all their endeavour to obtain the favour of dying by the hand of the enemy, have been constrained, to make good their resolution of bringing home the honour of victory or of losing their lives, to kill themselves even in the heat of battle. Of which there are other examples, but this is one: Philistus, general of the naval army of Dionysius the younger against the Syracusans, presented them battle, which was sharply disputed, their forces being equal: in this engagement, he had the better at the first, through his own valour: but the Syracusans drawing about his galley to environ him, after having done great things in his own person to disengage himself and hoping for no relief, with his own hand he took away the life he had so liberally, and in vain, exposed to the enemy.[2]

Muley Moloch, king of Fez, who lately won against Sebastian, king of Portugal, the battle so famous for the death of three kings, and for the transmission of that great kingdom to the crown of Castile, was extremely sick when the Portuguese entered in an hostile manner into his dominions; and from that day forward grew worse and worse, still drawing nearer to and foreseeing his end: yet never did man better employ his own sufficiency more vigorously and bravely than he did upon this occasion. He found

[1] "I will return, Marcus Fabius, a conqueror, from the fight: and if I fail, I wish the indignation of Jove, Mars, and the other offended gods may alight upon me."—LIVY, ii. 45.

[2] Plutarch, Life of Dionysius, c. 8.

himself too weak to undergo the pomp and ceremony of entering into his camp, which after their manner is very magnificent, and therefore resigned that honour to his brother; but this was all of the office of a general that he resigned; all the rest of greatest utility and necessity he most exactly and gloriously performed in his own person; his body lying upon a couch, but his judgment and courage upright and firm to his last gasp, and in some sort beyond it. He might have wasted his enemy, indiscreetly advanced into his dominions, without striking a blow; and it was a very unhappy occurrence, that for want of a little life or somebody to substitute in the conduct of this war and the affairs of a troubled state, he was compelled to seek a doubtful and bloody victory, having another by a better and surer way already in his hands. Notwithstanding, he wonderfully managed the continuance of his sickness in consuming the enemy, and in drawing them far from the assistance of their navy and the ports they had on the coast of Africa, even till the last day of his life, which he designedly reserved for this great battle. He arranged his battallia in a circular form, environing the Portuguese army on every side, which round circle coming to close in and to draw up close together, not only hindered them in the conflict (which was very sharp through the valour of the young invading king) considering that they had every way to present a front, but prevented their flight after the defeat, so that finding all passages possessed and shut up by the enemy, they were constrained to close up together again, "coacervanturque non solum cæde, sed etiam fuga,"[1] and there they were slain in heaps upon one another, leaving to the conqueror a very bloody and entire victory. Dying, he caused himself to be carried and hurried from place to place where most need was, and passing along the files, encouraged the captains and soldiers one after another; but a corner of his main battallia being broken, he was not to be held from mounting on horseback with his sword in his hand; he did his utmost to break from those about him, and to rush into the thickest of the battle, they all the while withholding him, some by the bridle, some by his

[1] Piled up not only in slaughter but in flight.

robe, and others by his stirrups. This last effort totally overwhelmed the little life he had left; they again laid him upon his bed; but coming to himself, and starting as it were out of his swoon, all other faculties failing, to give his people notice that they were to conceal his death (the most necessary command he had then to give, that his soldiers might not be discouraged with the news) he expired with his finger upon his mouth, the ordinary sign of keeping silence. Who ever lived so long and so far into death? whoever died so erect, or more like a man?

The most extreme degree of courageously treating death, and the most natural, is to look upon it not only without astonishment but without care, continuing the wonted course of life even into it, as Cato did, who entertained himself in study, and went to sleep, having a violent and bloody death in his heart, and the weapon in his hand with which he was resolved to despatch himself.

CHAPTER XXII.

OF POSTING.

I HAVE been none of the least able in this exercise, which is proper for men of my pitch, short and well knit; but I give it over; it shakes us too much to continue it long. I was just now reading,[1] that King Cyrus, the better to have news brought him from all parts of the empire, which was of a vast extent, caused it to be tried how far a horse could go in a day without baiting, and at that distance appointed men, whose business it was to have horses always in readiness, to mount those who were despatched to him: and some say, that this swift way of posting is equal to that of the flight of cranes.

Cæsar says,[2] that Lucius Vibullius Rufus, being in great haste to carry intelligence to Pompey, rode night and day, still taking fresh horses for the greater diligence and speed;

[1] In Xenoph., Cyrop., viii. 6, 9. [2] De Bell. Civ., iii. 11.

and he himself, as Suetonius reports,[1] travelled a hundred miles a day in a hired coach; but he was a furious courier, for where the rivers stopped his way he passed them by swimming, without turning out of his way to look for either bridge or ford. Tiberius Nero, going to see his brother Drusus, who was sick in Germany, travelled two hundred miles in four and twenty hours, having three coaches.[2] In the war the Romans had against King Antiochus, T. Sempronius Gracchus, says Livy, "Per dispositos equos prope incredibili celeritate ab Amphissa tertio die Pellam pervenit."[3] And it appears that they were established posts, and not horses purposely laid in upon this occasion.

Cecina's invention to send back news to his family was much more quick, for he took swallows along with him from home, and turned them out towards their nests when he would send back any news; setting a mark of some colour upon them to signify his meaning, according to what he and his people had before agreed upon.[4]

At the theatre at Rome masters of families carried pigeons in their bosoms to which they tied letters when they had a mind to send any orders to their people at home; and the pigeons were trained up to bring back an answer. D. Brutus made use of the same device when besieged in Mutina,[5] and others, elsewhere, have done the same.

In Peru they rode post upon men, who took them upon their shoulders in a certain kind of litters made for that purpose, and ran with such agility that, in their full speed, the first couriers transferred their load to the second without making any stop.

I understand that the Wallachians, who are the grand Signior's couriers, perform wonderful diligence, by reason they have liberty to dismount the first person they meet upon the road, giving him their own tired horses; and that to preserve themselves from being weary, they gird themselves straight about the middle with a broad girdle; but I could never find any benefit from this.

[1] In vita, c. 57. [2] Pliny, Nat. Hist., vii. 20.

[3] "Upon horses purposely laid in, he, by an almost incredible speed, rode in three days from Amphissa to Pella."—Livy, xxxviii. 7.

[4] Pliny, Nat. Hist., x. 24. [5] Idem, ibid., 77.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OF ILL MEANS EMPLOYED TO A GOOD END.

THERE is wonderful relation and correspondence in this universal government of the works of nature, which very well makes it appear that it is neither accidental nor carried on by divers masters. The diseases and conditions of our bodies are, in like manner, manifest in states and governments; kingdoms and republics are founded, flourish, and decay with age as we do. We are subject to a repletion of humours, useless and dangerous: whether of those that are good (for even those the physicians are afraid of; and seeing we have nothing in us that is stable, they say that a too brisk and vigorous perfection of health must be abated by art, lest our nature, unable to rest in any certain condition, and not having whither to rise to mend itself, make too sudden and too disorderly a retreat; and therefore prescribe wrestlers to purge and bleed, to qualify that superabundant health), or else a repletion of evil humours, which is the ordinary cause of sickness. States are very often sick of the like repletion, and various sorts of purgations have commonly been applied. Sometimes a great multitude of families are turned out to clear the country, who seek out new abodes elsewhere and encroach upon others. After this manner our ancient Franks came from the remotest part of Germany to seize upon Gaul, and to drive thence the first inhabitants; so was that infinite deluge of men made up who came into Italy under the conduct of Brennus and others; so the Goths and Vandals, and also the people who now possess Greece, left their native country to go settle elsewhere, where they might have more room; and there are scarce two or three little corners in the world that have not felt the effect of such removals. The Romans by this means erected their colonies; for, perceiving their city to grow immeasurably populous, they eased it of the most unnecessary people, and sent them to inhabit and cultivate the lands conquered by them; sometimes also they pur-

posely maintained wars with some of their enemies, not only to keep their own men in action, for fear lest idleness, the mother of corruption, should bring upon them some worse inconvenience,

> "Et patimur longæ pacis mala; sævior armis
> Luxuria incumbit:"[1]

but also to serve for a blood-letting to their Republic, and a little to evaporate the too vehement heat of their youth, to prune and clear the branches from the stock too luxuriant in wood; and to this end it was that they maintained so long a war with Carthage.

In the treaty of Bretigny, Edward III., king of England, would not, in the general peace he then made with our king, comprehend the controversy about the Duchy of Brittany, that he might have a place wherein to discharge himself of his soldiers, and that the vast number of English he had brought over to serve him in his expedition here might not return back into England. And this also was one reason why our King Philip consented to send his son John upon a foreign expedition, that he might take along with him a great number of hot young men who were then in his pay.

There are many in our times who talk at this rate, wishing that this hot emotion that is now amongst us might discharge itself in some neighbouring war, for fear lest all the peccant humours that now reign in this politic body of ours may diffuse themselves farther, keep the fever still in the height, and at last cause our total ruin; and, in truth, a foreign is much more supportable than a civil war; but I do not believe that God will favour so unjust a design as to offend and quarrel with others for our own advantage.

> "Nil mihi tam valde placeat, Rhamnusia virgo,
> Quod temere invitis suscipiatur heris."[2]

And yet the weakness of our condition often pushes us upon the necessity of making use of ill means to a good end. Lycurgus, the most virtuous and perfect legislator

[1] "We suffer the ills of a long peace; for luxury is more pernicious than war."—JUVENAL, vi. 291.

[2] "O Nemesis, let me never so strongly desire to receive anything to the wrong of the lawful owner."—CATULLUS, lxviii. 77.

that ever was, invented this very unjust practice of making the Helots, who were their slaves, drunk by force, to the end that the Spartans, seeing them so lost and buried in wine, might abhor the excess of this vice.[1] And yet those were still more to blame, who of old gave leave that criminals, to what sort of death soever condemned, should be cut up alive by the physicians, that they might make a true discovery of our inward parts, and build their art upon greater certainty; for, if we must run into excesses, it is more excusable to do it for the health of the soul, than that of the body; as the Romans trained up the people to valour, and the contempt of dangers and death, by those furious spectacles of gladiators and fencers, who, having to fight it out to the last, cut, mangled, and killed one another in their presence:

> "Quid vesani aliud sibi vult ars impia ludi,
> Quid mortes juvenum quid sanguine pasta voluptas?"[2]

and this custom continued till the Emperor Theodosius' time.

> "Arripe dilatam tua, dux, in tempora famam,
> Quodque patris superest, successor laudis habeto
> Nullus in urbe cadat, cujus sit pœna voluptas . . .
> Jam solis contenta feris, infamis arena
> Nulla cruentatis homicidia ludat in armis."[3]

It was, in truth, a wonderful example, and of great advantage for the training up the people, to see every day before their eyes a hundred, two hundred, nay, a thousand couples of men armed against one another, cut one another to pieces with so great a constancy of courage, that they were never heard to utter so much as one syllable of weakness or commiseration; never seen to turn their backs, nor so much as to make one cowardly step to evade a blow, but rather

[1] Plutarch, in vita, c. 21.

[2] "What other end the impious art of the gladiators, the slaughter of young men, the delight in the effusion of blood."—PRUDENTIUS, *Contra Symmachum*, ii. 643.

[3] "Prince, take the honours delayed for thy reign, and be successor to thy fathers; henceforth let none at Rome be slain for sport. Let beast's blood stain the infamous arena, and no more homicides be there acted."—*Idem, ibid.*

exposed their necks to the adversary's sword and presented themselves to receive the stroke; and many of them, when wounded to death, have sent to ask the spectators if they were satisfied with their behaviour, before they lay down to die upon the place. It was not enough for them to fight and to die bravely, but cheerfully too; insomuch that they were hissed and cursed if they made any hesitation about receiving their death. The very girls themselves set them on:

> "Consurgit ad ictus,
> Et, quoties victor ferrum jugulo inserit, illa
> Delicias ait esse suas, pectusque jacentis
> Virgo modesta jubet converso pollice rumpi."[1]

The first Romans only condemned criminals to this example: but they afterwards employed innocent slaves in the work, and even freemen too, who sold themselves to this purpose, nay, moreover, senators and knights of Rome, and also women:

> "Nunc caput in mortem vendunt, et funus arenæ,
> Atque hostem sibi quisque parat, cum bella quiescunt."[2]

> "Hos inter fremitus novosque lusus . . .
> Stat sexus rudis insciusque ferri,
> Et pugnas capit improbus viriles;"[3]

which I should think strange and incredible, if we were not accustomed, every day, to see in our own wars many thousands of men of other nations, for money to stake their blood and their lives in quarrels wherein they have no manner of concern.

[1] "The modest virgin is so delighted with the sport, that she applauds the blow, and when the victor bathes his sword in his fellow's throat, she is delighted, and, with turned thumb, orders him to rip up the bosom of the prostrate victim."—PRUDENTIUS, *Contra Symmachum*, 617.

[2] "They sell themselves to death, and, since the wars are ceased, each for himself a foe prepares."—MANILIUS, *Astron.*, iv. 225.

[3] "Amidst these tumults and new sports, the tender sex, unskilled in arms, immodestly engaged in manly fights."—STATIUS, *Sylv.*, i. 6, 51.

CHAPTER XXIV

OF THE ROMAN GRANDEUR.

I WILL only say a word or two of this infinite argument, to show the simplicity of those who compare the pitiful grandeur of these times with that of Rome. In the seventh book of Cicero's Familiar Epistles (and let the grammarians put out that surname of familiar if they please, for in truth it is not very proper; and they who instead of familiar have substituted "ad familiares," may gather something to justify them for so doing, out of what Suetonius says in the Life of Cæsar,[1] that there was a volume of letters of his, "ad familiares") there is one[2] directed to Cæsar, then in Gaul, wherein Cicero repeats these words, which were in the end of another letter that Cæsar had written to him: "As to what concerns Marcus Furius, whom you have recommended to me, I will make him king of Gaul, and if you would have me advance any other friend of yours send him to me." It was no new thing for a simple citizen of Rome, as Cæsar then was, to dispose of kingdoms, for he took away that of King Deiotarus from him, to give it to a gentleman of the city of Pergamus, called Mithridates;[3] and they who wrote his Life, record several cities sold by him; and Suetonius says,[4] that he had once from King Ptolemy three millions and six hundred thousand crowns, which was very like selling him his own kingdom.

"Tot Galatæ, tot Pontus, tot Lydia, nummis."[5]

Marcus Antonius said,[6] that the grandeur of the people of Rome was not so much seen in what they took, as in what they gave; and, indeed, some ages before Antonius, they had dethroned one amongst the rest with so wonderful

[1] c. 56.
[2] Cicero, Ep. Fam., vii. 5.
[3] Idem, De Divin., ii. 37.
[4] In vita, c. 54.
[5] "So much for Galatia, so much for Pontus, so much for Lydia." —CLAUDIUS, in *Eutrop.*, i. 203.
[6] Plutarch's Life of Antony, c. 8.

authority, that in all the Roman history I have not observed anything that more denotes the height of their power. Antiochus possessed all Egypt, and was, moreover, ready to conquer Cyprus, and other appendages of that empire: when being upon the progress of his victories, C. Popilius came to him from the Senate, and at their first meeting refused to take him by the hand, till he had first read his letters, which after the king had read, and told him he would consider of them, Popilius made a circle about him with the stick he had in his hand, saying, "Return me an answer, that I may carry it back to the Senate before thou stirrest out of this circle." Antiochus, astonished at the roughness of so positive a command, after a little pause, replied, "I will obey the Senate's command;" and then it was that Popilius saluted him as a friend to the people of Rome.[1] After having quitted claim to so great a monarchy, and in such a torrent of successful fortune, upon three words in writing, in earnest he had reason, as he afterwards did, to send the Senate word by his ambassadors, that he had received their order with the same respect as if it had been sent by the immortal gods.

All the kingdoms that Augustus gained by the right of war, he either restored to those who had lost them, or presented them to strangers. And Tacitus, in reference to this, speaking of Cogidunus, king of England, gives us, by a marvellous touch, an instance of that infinite power: the Romans, says he, were from all antiquity accustomed to leave the kings they had subdued in possession of their kingdoms under their authority, "that they might have even kings to be their slaves:" "Ut haberent instrumenta servitutis et reges."[2] 'Tis probable that Solyman, whom we have seen make a gift of Hungary and other principalities, had therein more respect to this consideration, than to that he was wont to allege, viz., that he was glutted and overcharged with so many monarchies and so much dominion, as his own valour and that of his ancestors had acquired.

[1] Livy, xlv. 12. [2] Idem, ibid., 13.

CHAPTER XXV.

NOT TO COUNTERFEIT BEING SICK.

THERE is an epigram in Martial, and one of the very good ones—for he has of all sorts—where he pleasantly tells the story of Cælius, who, to avoid making his court to some great men of Rome, to wait their rising, and to attend them abroad, pretended to have the gout; and the better to colour this anointed his legs, and had them lapped up in a great many swathings, and perfectly counterfeited both the gesture and countenance of a gouty person; till in the end, Fortune did him the kindness to make him one indeed.

> "Tantum cura potest, et ars dolore!
> Desit fingere Cælius podagram,"[1]

I think I have read somewhere in Appian,[2] a story like this, of one who to escape the proscriptions of the triumvirs of Rome, and the better to be concealed from the discovery of those who pursued him, having hidden himself in a disguise, would yet add this invention, to counterfeit having but one eye; but when he came to have a little more liberty, and went to take off the plaster he had a great while worn over his eye, he found he had totally lost the sight of it indeed, and that it was absolutely gone. 'Tis possible that the action of sight was dulled from having been so long without exercise, and that the optic power was wholly retired into the other eye: for we evidently perceive that the eye we keep shut sends some part of its virtue to its fellow, so that it will swell and grow bigger; and so inaction, with the heat of ligatures and plasters, might very well have brought some gouty humour upon this dissembler of Martial.

[1] "The power of counterfeiting maladies is so great, that Cælius no longer needs to feign the gout; he has got it."—MARTIAL, *Ep.* vii. 39, 8.

[2] De Bell. Civil., iv.

Reading in Froissart the vow of a troop of young English gallants, to keep their left eyes bound up till they had arrived in France and performed some notable exploit upon us, I have often been tickled with the conceit: suppose it had befallen them as it did the Roman, and they had returned with but an eye a piece to their mistresses, for whose sakes they had made this ridiculous vow.

Mothers have reason to rebuke their children when they counterfeit having but one eye, squinting, lameness, or any other personal defect; for, besides that their bodies being then so tender may be subject to take an ill bent, fortune, I know not how, sometimes seems to delight in taking us at our word; and I have heard several examples related of people who have become really sick, by only feigning to be so. I have always used, whether on horseback or on foot, to carry a stick in my hand, and even to affect doing it with an elegant air; many have threatened that this fancy would one day be turned into necessity: if so, I should be the first of my family to have the gout.

But let us a little lengthen this chapter, and add another anecdote concerning blindness. Pliny reports[1] of one who, dreaming he was blind, found himself so indeed in the morning without any preceding infirmity in his eyes. The force of imagination might assist in this case, as I have said elsewhere,[2] and Pliny seems to be of the same opinion; but it is more likely that the motions which the body felt within, of which physicians, if they please, may find out the cause, taking away his sight, were the occasion of his dream.

Let us add another story, not very improper for this subject, which Seneca relates in one of his epistles:[3] "You know," says he, writing to Lucilius, "that Harpaste, my wife's fool, is thrown upon me as an hereditary charge, for I have naturally an aversion to those monsters; and if I have a mind to laugh at a fool, I need not seek him far, I can laugh at myself. This fool has suddenly lost her sight: I tell you a strange, but a very true thing: she is not sensible that she is blind, but eternally importunes her keeper to take her abroad, because she says the house is

[1] Nat. Hist., vii. 50. [2] Book i. c. 20. [3] Ep. 50.

dark. That what we laugh at in her, I pray you to believe, happens to every one of us: no one knows himself to be avaricious or grasping: and, again, the blind call for a guide, while we stray of our own accord. I am not ambitious, we say; but a man cannot live otherwise at Rome; I am not wasteful, but the city requires a great outlay; 'tis not my fault if I am choleric—if I have not yet established any certain course of life: 'tis the fault of youth. Let us not seek our disease out of ourselves; 'tis in us, and planted in our bowels; and the mere fact that we do not perceive ourselves to be sick, renders us more hard to be cured. If we do not betimes begin to see to ourselves, when shall we have provided for so many wounds and evils wherewith we abound? And yet we have a most sweet and charming medicine in philosophy; for of all the rest we are sensible of no pleasure till after the cure: this pleases and heals at once." This is what Seneca says, that has carried me from my subject, but there is advantage in the change.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OF THUMBS.

TACITUS reports,[1] that amongst certain barbarian kings, their manner was, when they would make a firm obligation, to join their right hands close to one another, and intertwist their thumbs; and when, by force of straining, the blood it appeared in the ends, they lightly pricked them with some sharp instrument, and mutually sucked them.

Physicians say, that the thumbs are the master fingers of the hand, and that their Latin etymology is derived from "pollere."[2] The Greeks called them Αντιχειρ, as who should say, another hand. And it seems that the Latins also sometimes take it in this sense for the whole hand;

[1] Annal, xii. 47.

[2] To be powerful. This seems taken from Macrobius, Saturn., vii. 13, who took it in his turn from Atticus Capito.—COSTE.

"Sed nec vocibus excitata blandis,
Molli pollice nec rogata, surgit."[1]

It was at Rome a signification of favour to depress and turn in the thumbs:

"Fautor utroque tuum laudabit pollice ludum:"[2]

and of disfavour to elevate and thrust them outward:

"Converso pollice vulgi,
Quemlibet occidunt populariter."[3]

The Romans exempted from war all such as were maimed in the thumbs, as having no more sufficient strength to hold their weapons. Augustus confiscated the estate of a Roman knight, who had maliciously cut off the thumbs of two young children he had, to excuse them from going into the armies:[4] and, before him, the Senate, in the time of the Italic war, had condemned Caius Vatienus to perpetual imprisonment, and confiscated all his goods, for having purposely cut off the thumb of his left hand, to exempt himself from that expedition.[5] Some one, I have forgotten who,[6] having won a naval battle, cut off the thumbs of all his vanquished enemies, to render them incapable of fighting and of handling the oar. The Athenians also caused the thumbs of the Æginatans to be cut off, to deprive them of the superiority in the art of navigation.[7]

In Lacedæmon, pedagogues chastised their scholars by biting their thumbs.[8]

[1] "Neither to be excited by soft words, or by the thumb."—MART., xii. 98, 8.

[2] "Thy patron will applaud thy sport with both thumbs."—HORACE, *Ep.* i. 18, 66.

[3] "The populace, with reverted thumbs, kill all that come before them."—JUVENAL, iii. 36.

[4] Suetonius, in vita, c. 24.

[5] Valerius Maximus, v. 3, 8. 'According to Le Clerc the word poltroon comes to us through the French from *pollice truncus.*

[6] Philocles, one of the Athenian generals in the Peloponnesian war.—Idem.

[7] Valerius Maximus, ix. 2, Ext. 8; Cicero, De Offic., iii. 11.

[8] Plutarch, Life of Lycurgus, c. 14.

CHAPTER XXVII.

COWARDICE THE MOTHER OF CRUELTY.

I HAVE often heard it said, that cowardice is the mother of cruelty: and I have found by experience, that malicious and inhuman animosity and fierceness are usually accompanied with feminine weakness. I have seen the most cruel people, and upon frivolous occasions, apt to cry. Alexander, the tyrant of Pheres, durst not be a spectator of tragedies in the theatre, for fear lest his citizens should see him weep at the misfortunes of Hecuba and Andromache, who himself without pity caused so many people every day to be murdered.[1] Is it not meanness of spirit that renders them so pliable to all extremities? Valour, whose effect is only to be exercised against resistance—

"Nec nisi bellantis gaudet cervice juvenci"[2]—

stops when it sees the enemy at its mercy; but pusillanimity, to say that it was also in the game, not having dared to meddle in the first act of danger, takes as its part, the second, of blood and massacre. The murders in victories are commonly performed by the rascality and hangers-on of an army, and that which causes so many unheard of cruelties in domestic wars is, that the dregs of the people are fleshed in being up to the elbows in blood, and ripping up bodies that lie prostrate at their feet, having no sense of any other valour:

"Et lupus, et turpes instant morientibus ursi,
Et quæcunque minor nobilitate fera est:"[3]

like cowardly curs, that in the house worry and tear the skins of wild beasts, they durst not come near in the field. What is it in these times of ours that makes our quarrels

[1] Plutarch, Life of Pelopidas, c. 15.

[2] "Nor delights in killing a bull unless he resists."—CLAUDIUS, *Ep. ad Hadrianum*, v. 30.

[3] "Wolves and the filthy bears, and all the baser beasts, fall upon the dying."—OVID, *Trist.*, iii. 5, 35.

mortal; and that, whereas our fathers had some degrees of revenge, we now begin with the last in ours, and at the first meeting nothing is to be said but, kill? What is this but cowardice?

Every one is sensible that there is more bravery and disdain in subduing an enemy, than in cutting his throat; and in making him yield, than in putting him to the sword: besides that the appetite of revenge is better satisfied and pleased because its only aim is to make itself felt. And this is the reason why we do not fall upon a beast or a stone when they hurt us, because they are not capable of being sensible of our revenge; and to kill a man is to save him from the injury and offence we intend him. And as Bias cried out to a wicked fellow, "I know that sooner or later thou wilt have thy reward, but I am afraid I shall not see it;"[1] and pitied the Orchomenians that the penitence of Lyciscus for the treason committed against them, came at a season when there was no one remaining alive of those who had been interested in the offence, and whom the pleasure of this penitence should affect:[2] so revenge is to be pitied, when the person on whom it is executed is deprived of means of suffering under it: for as the avenger will look on to enjoy the pleasure of his revenge, so the person on whom he takes revenge, should be a spectator too, to be afflicted and to repent. "He will repent it," we say, and because we have given him a pistol-shot through the head, do we imagine he will repent? On the contrary, if we but observe, we shall find, that he makes mouths at us in falling, and is so far from penitency, that he does not so much as repine at us; and we do him the kindest office of life, which is to make him die insensibly, and soon: we are afterwards to hide ourselves, and to shift and fly from the officers of justice, who pursue us, whilst he is at rest. Killing is good to frustrate an offence to come, not to revenge one that is already past; and more an act of fear than of bravery; of precaution than of courage; of defence than of enterprise. It is manifest that by it we lose both the true end of revenge and the care of our reputation; we

[1] Plutarch, on the Delay in Divine Justice, c. 2.

[2] It is not Bias who pitied the Orchomenians, but Patroclus, one of the other interlocutors in the dialogue.

are afraid, if he lives he will do us another injury as great as the first; 'tis not out of animosity to him, but care of thyself, that thou gettest rid of him.

In the kingdom of Narsingua this expedient would be useless to us, where not only soldiers, but tradesmen also, end their differences by the sword. The king never denies the field to any who wish to fight; and when they are persons of quality, he looks on, rewarding the victor with a chain of gold, for which any one who pleases may fight with him again, so that, by having come off from one combat, he has engaged himself in many.

If we thought by virtue to be always masters of our enemies, and to triumph over them at pleasure, we should be sorry they should escape from us as they do, by dying: but we have a mind to conquer, more with safety than honour, and, in our quarrel, more pursue the end than the glory.

Asinius Pollio who, as being a worthy man, was the less to be excused, committed a like error, when, having written a libel against Plancus, he forbore to publish it till he was dead; which is to bite one's thumb at a blind man, to rail at one who is deaf, to wound a man who has no feeling, rather than to run the hazard of his resentment. And it was also said of him, that it was only for hobgoblins to wrestle with the dead.

He who stays to see the author die, whose writings he intends to question, what does he say but that he is weak in his aggressiveness? It was told to Aristotle that some one had spoken ill of him: "Let him do more," said he,[1] "let him whip me too, provided I am not there."

Our fathers contented themselves with revenging an insult with the lie, the lie with a box of the ear, and so forward; they were valiant enough not to fear their adversaries, living and provoked: we tremble for fear, so long as we see them on foot. And that this is so, does not our noble practice of these days, equally to prosecute to death both him that has offended us and him we have offended, make it out? 'Tis also a kind of cowardice that has introduced the custom of having seconds, thirds, and fourths

[1] Diogenes Laertius, ix. 18.

in our duels; they were formerly duels; they are now skirmishes, rencontres, and battles. Solitude was, doubtless, terrible to those who were the first inventors of this practice, "Quum in se cuique minimum fiduciæ esset,"[1] for naturally, any company whatever is consolatory in danger. Third persons were formerly called in to prevent disorder and foul play only, and to be witness of the fortune of the combat; but now they have brought it to this pass that the witnesses themselves engage; whoever is invited cannot handsomely stand by as an idle spectator, for fear of being suspected either of want of affection or of courage. Besides the injustice and unworthiness of such an action, of engaging other strength and valour in the protection of your honour than your own, I conceive it a disadvantage to a brave man, and who wholly relies upon himself, to shuffle his fortune with that of a second; every one runs hazard enough himself without hazarding for another, and has enough to do to assure himself in his own valour for the defence of his life, without intrusting a thing so dear in a third man's hand. For, if it be not expressly agreed upon before, to the contrary, 'tis a combined party of all four, and if your second be killed, you have two to deal withal, with good reason; and to say that it is foul play, it is so indeed, as it is, well armed, to attack a man who has but the hilt of a broken sword in his hand, or, clear and untouched, a man who is desperately wounded: but if these be advantages you have got by fighting, you may make use of them without reproach. The disparity and inequality are only weighed and considered from the condition of the combatants when they began; as to the rest, you must take your chance: and though you had, alone, three enemies upon you at once, your two companions being killed, you have no more wrong done you, than I should do in a battle, by running a man through whom I should see engaged with one of our own men, with the like advantage. The nature of society will have it so that where there is troop against troop, as where our Duke of Orleans challenged Henry king of England, a hundred against a hundred; three hundred against as

[1] "They had little confidence in themselves."

many, as the Argians against the Lacedæmonians; three to three, as the Horatii against the Curiatii, the multitude on either side is considered but as one single man: the hazard, wherever there is company, being confused and mixed.

I have a domestic interest in this discourse; for my brother, the Sieur de Matecoulom, was at Rome asked by a gentleman with whom he had no great acquaintance and who was a defendant challenged by another, to be his second; in this duel, he found himself matched with a gentleman much better known to him. (I would fain have an explanation of these rules of honour, which so often shock and confound those of reason.) After having despatched his man, seeing the two principals still on foot and sound, he ran in to disengage his friend. What could he do less? should he have stood still, and if chance would have ordered it so, have seen him he was come thither to defend killed before his face? what he had hitherto done helped not the business; the quarrel was yet undecided. The courtesy that you can, and certainly ought to show to your enemy, when you have reduced him to an ill condition and have a great advantage over him, I do not see how you can do it, where the interest of another is concerned, where you are only called in as an assistant, and the quarrel is none of yours: he could neither be just nor courteous, at the hazard of him he was there to serve. And he was therefore enlarged from the prisons of Italy at the speedy and solemn request of our king. Indiscreet nation! we are not content to make our vices and follies known to the world by report only, but we must go into foreign countries, there to show them what fools we are. Put three Frenchmen into the deserts of Libya, they will not live a month together without fighting; so that you would say this peregrination were a thing purposely designed to give foreigners the pleasure of our tragedies, and, for the most part, to such as rejoice and laugh at our miseries. We go into Italy to learn to fence, and fall to practise at the expense of our lives before we have learned it; and yet, by the rule of discipline, we should put the theory before the practice. We discover ourselves to be but learners:

> "Primitiæ juvenum miseræ, bellique futuri
> Dura rudimenta."[1]

I know that fencing is an art very useful to its end (in a duel betwixt two princes, cousin-germans, in Spain, the elder, says Livy,[2] by his skill and dexterity in arms, easily overcoming the greater and more awkward strength of the younger), and of which the knowledge, as I experimentally know, has inspired some with courage above their natural measure; but this is not properly valour, because it supports itself upon address, and is founded upon something besides itself. The honour of combat consists in the jealousy of courage, and not of skill; and therefore I have known a friend of mine, famed as a great master in this exercise, in his quarrels make choice of such arms as might deprive him of this advantage and that wholly depended upon fortune and assurance, that they might not attribute his victory rather to his skill in fencing than his valour. When I was young, gentlemen avoided the reputation of good fencers as injurious to them, and learned to fence with all imaginable privacy as a trade of subtlety, derogating from true and natural valour.

> "Non schivar, non parar, non ritirarsi,
> Voglion costor, nè qui destrezza ha parte;
> Non danno i colpi or finti, or pieni, or scarsi!
> Toglie l'ira e il furor l'uso dell' arte.
> Odi le spade orribilmente utarsi
> A mezzo il ferro; il pie d'orma non parte,
> Sempre è il piè fermo, e la man sempre in moto;
> Nè scende taglio in van, nè punta à voto."[3]

Butts, tilting, and barriers, the images of warlike fights,

[1] "Fatal to the youth their first essays; hard the rudiments of future war."—VIRGIL, *Æneid*, xi. 156. The text has *juvenis*, and *propinqui* instead of *futuri*.

[2] xxviii. 21.

[3] "They neither shrank, nor vantage sought of ground,
They travers'd not, nor skipt from part to part,
Their blows were neither false, nor feigned found:
In fight, their rage would let them use no art.
Their swords together clash with dreadful sound,
Their feet stand fast, and neither stir nor start,
They move their hands, stedfast their feet remain.
Nor blow, nor foin they strook, or thrust in vain."
—TASSO, *Gerus. Lib.* c. 12, st. 55, Fairfax's translation.

were the exercises of our forefathers: this other exercise is so much the less noble, as it only respects a private end; that teaches us to destroy one another against law and justice, and that every way always produces very ill effects. It is much more worthy and more becoming to exercise ourselves in things that strengthen than that weaken our government and that tend to the public safety and common glory. Publius Rutilius, Consul,[1] was the first who taught the soldiers to handle their arms with skill, and joined art with valour, not for the use of private quarrel, but for war and the quarrels of the people of Rome; a popular and civil defence. And besides the example of Cæsar,[2] who commanded his men to shoot chiefly at the face of Pompey's soldiers in the battle of Pharsalia, a thousand other commanders have also bethought them to invent new forms of weapons and new ways of striking and defending, according as occasion should require.

But as Philopœmen[3] condemned wrestling, wherein he excelled, because the preparatives that were therein employed were differing from those that appertain to military discipline, to which alone he conceived men of honour ought wholly to apply themselves; so it seems to me that this address to which we form our limbs, those writhings and motions young men are taught in this new school, are not only of no use, but rather contrary and hurtful to the practice of fight in battle; and also our people commonly make use of particular weapons, and peculiarly designed for duel; and I have known when it has been disapproved, that a gentleman challenged to fight with rapier and poignard appeared in the array of a man-at-arms; and that another should take his cloak instead of his poignard. It is worthy of consideration that Laches in Plato,[4] speaking of a learning to fence after our manner, says that he never knew any great soldier come out of that school, especially the masters of it: and, indeed, as to them, our experience tells as much. As to the rest, we may at least conclude that they are qualities of no relation or correspondence; and in the education of the children of his

[1] Valerius Maximus, ii. 3, 2. [2] Plutarch, in vita, c. 12.
[3] Idem, in vita, c. 12. [4] In the Dialogue entitled Laches.

government, Plato[1] interdicts the art of boxing, introduced by Amycus and Epeius, and that of wrestling, by Antæus and Cercyo, because they have another end than to render youth fit for the service of war and contribute nothing to it. But I see that I have somewhat strayed from my theme.

The Emperor Maurice, being advertised by dreams and several prognostics, that one Phocas, an obscure soldier, should kill him, questioned his son-in-law Philip who this Phocas was, and what were his nature, qualities, and manners; and so soon as Philip, amongst other things, had told him that he was cowardly and timorous, the emperor immediately concluded then that he was a murderer and cruel. What is it that makes tyrants so sanguinary? 'Tis only the solicitude for their own safety, and that their faint hearts can furnish them with no other means of securing themselves than in exterminating those who may hurt them, even so much as women, for fear of a scratch:

"Cuncta ferit, dum cuncta timet."[2]

The first cruelties are exercised for themselves: thence springs the fear of a just revenge, which afterwards produces a series of new cruelties, to obliterate one another. Philip, king of Macedon, who had so much to do with the people of Rome, agitated with the horror of so many murders committed by his order, and doubting of being able to keep himself secure from so many families, at divers times mortally injured and offended by him, resolved to seize all the children of those he had caused to be slain, to despatch them daily one after another, and so to establish his own repose.[3]

Fine matter is never impertinent, however placed; and therefore I, who more consider the weight and utility of what I deliver than its order and connection, need not fear in this place to bring in an excellent story, though it be a little by-the-by; for when they are rich in their own native

[1] Laws, vii.

[2] "He strikes at all, who fears all."—CLAUDIUS, in *Eutrop.*, i. 182.

[3] Livy, xl. 3.

beauty, and are able to justify themselves, the least-end of a hair will serve to draw them into my discourse.

Amongst others condemned by Philip,[1] Herodicus, prince of Thessaly, had been one; he had moreover after him caused his two sons-in-law to be put to death, each leaving a son very young behind him. Theoxena and Archo were their two widows. Theoxena, though highly courted to it, could not be persuaded to marry again: Archo married Poris, the greatest man among the Ænians, and by him had a great many children, whom she dying, left at a very tender age. Theoxena, moved with a maternal charity towards her nephews, that she might have them under her own eyes and in her own protection, married Poris: when presently comes a proclamation of the king's edict. This brave spirited mother, suspecting the cruelty of Philip, and afraid of the insolence of the soldiers towards these charming and tender children, was so bold as to declare that she would rather kill them with her own hands than deliver them. Poris, startled at this protestation, promised her to steal them away, and to transport them to Athens, and there commit them to the custody of some faithful friends of his. They took, therefore, the opportunity of an annual feast which was celebrated at Ænia in honour of Æneas, and thither they went. Having appeared by day at the public ceremonies and banquet, they stole the night following into a vessel laid ready for the purpose, to escape away by sea. The wind proved contrary, and finding themselves in the morning within sight of the land whence they had launched overnight, and being pursued by the guards of the port, Poris perceiving this, laboured all he could to make the mariners do their utmost to escape from the pursuers. But Theoxena, frantic with affection and revenge, in pursuance of her former resolution, prepared both weapons and poison, and exposing them before them; "Go to, my children," said she, "death is now the only means of your defence and liberty, and shall administer occasion to the gods to exercise their sacred justice: these sharp swords, and these full cups, will open you the way into it: courage, fear nothing! And thou, my son, who

[1] Livy, xl. 4.

art the eldest, take this steel into thy hand, that thou mayest the more bravely die." The children having on one side so powerful a counsellor, and the enemy at their throats on the other, ran all of them eagerly upon what was next to hand; and, half dead, were thrown into the sea. Theoxena, proud of having so gloriously provided for the safety of her children; clasping her arms with great affection about her husband's neck, "Let us, my friend," "follow these boys, and enjoy the same sepulchre they do;" and so, having embraced, they threw themselves headlong into the sea; so that the ship was carried back without the owners into the harbour.

Tyrants, at once both to kill and to make their anger felt, have pumped their wit to invent the most lingering deaths. They will have their enemies despatched, but not so fast that they may not have leisure to taste their vengeance. And, therein, they are mightily perplexed; for if the torments they inflict are violent, they are short; if long, they are not then so painful as they desire; and thus plague themselves in choice of the greatest cruelty. Of this we have a thousand examples in antiquity, and I know not whether we, unawares, do not retain some traces of this barbarity.

All that exceeds a simple death appears to me absolute cruelty. Our justice cannot expect that he, whom the fear of dying by being beheaded or hanged will not restrain, should be any more awed by the imagination of a languishing fire, pincers, or the wheel. And I know not, in the meantime, whether we do not throw them into despair; for in what condition can be the soul of a man, expecting four and twenty hours together to be broken upon a wheel, or after the old way, nailed to a cross. Josephus[1] relates, that in the time of the war the Romans made in Judæa, happening to pass by where they had three days before crucified certain Jews, he amongst them knew three of his own friends, and obtained the favour of having them taken down, of whom two, he says, died, the third lived a great while after.

Chalcondylas, a writer of good credit, in the records he

[1] In the Hist. of his Life.

has left behind him of things that happened in his time, and near him,[1] tells us, as of the most excessive torment, of that the Emperor Mohammed very often practised, of cutting off men in the middle by the diaphragm with one blow of a scimitar, whence it followed that they died as it were two deaths at once; and both the one part, says he, and the other, were seen to stir and strive a great while after in very great torment. I do not think there was any great suffering in this motion: the torments that are the most dreadful to look on are not always the greatest to endure; and I find those that other historians relate to have been practised by him upon the Epiriot lords, are more horrid and cruel, where they were condemned to be flayed alive piecemeal, after so malicious a manner that they continued fifteen days in that misery.

As also these other two following: Crœsus,[2] having caused a gentleman, the favourite of his brother Pantaleon, to be seized, carried him into a fuller's shop, where he caused him to be scratched and carded with the cards and combs belonging to that trade till he died. George Sechel, chief commander of the peasants of Poland, who committed so many mischiefs under the title of the Crusade, being defeated in battle and taken by the Vayvod of Transylvania, was three days bound naked upon the rack, exposed to all sorts of torments that any one could contrive against him; during which time many other prisoners were kept fasting; in the end, he living and looking on, they made his beloved brother Lucat, for whom alone he entreated, taking upon himself the blame of all their evil actions, drink his blood, and caused twenty of his most favoured captains to feed upon him, tearing his flesh in pieces with their teeth, and swallowing the morsels. The remainder of his body and his bowels, so soon as he was dead, were boiled, and others of his followers compelled to eat them.

[1] Hist. of the Turks, lib. x.

[2] Herodotus, i. 92.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

ALL THINGS HAVE THEIR SEASON.

SUCH as compare Cato the Censor with the younger Cato, who killed himself, compare two beautiful natures, much resembling one another. The first acquired his reputation several ways, and excels in military exploits and the utility of his public employments; but the virtue of the younger, besides, that it were blasphemy to compare any to it in vigour, was much more pure and unblemished. For who can acquit the Censor of envy and ambition, having dared to jostle the honour of Scipio, a man in goodness and all other excellent qualities infinitely beyond him, or any other of his time?

That which they[1] report of him, amongst other things, that in his extreme old age he put himself upon learning the Greek tongue with so greedy an appetite, as if to quench a long thirst, does not seem to me to make much for his honour; it being properly what we call falling into second childhood. All things have their seasons, even the best, and a man may say his Paternoster out of time; as they accused T. Quintus Flaminius, that being general of an army, he was seen praying apart in the time of a battle that he won.[2]

"Imponit finem sapiens et rebus honestis."[3]

Eudemonidas, seeing Xenocrates when very old, still very intent upon his school lectures: "When will this man be wise," said he, "if he is yet learning?" And Philopœmen, to those who extolled King Ptolemy for every day inuring his person to the exercise of arms: "It is not," said he, "commendable in a king of his age to exercise himself in these things; he ought now really to employ them." The

[1] Plutarch, Life of Cato the Censor, c. i.

[2] Plutarch, Parallel of T. Quintus Flaminius with Philopœmen, sec. 2.

[3] "The wise man limits even honest things."—JUVENAL, vi. 444.

young are to make their preparations, the old to enjoy them, say the sages:[1] and the greatest vice they observe in us is that our desires incessantly grow young again; we are always re-beginning to live.

Our studies and desires should sometime be sensible of age; yet we have one foot in the grave and still our appetites and pursuits spring every day anew within us:

> "Tu secanda marmora
> Locas sub ipsum funus, et, sepulcri
> Immemor, struis domos."[2]

The longest of my designs is not of above a year's extent; I think of nothing now but ending; rid myself of all new hopes and enterprises; take my last leave of every place I depart from, and every day dispossess myself of what I have. "Olim jam nec perit quicquam mihi, nec acquiritur . . . plus superest viatici quam viæ."[3]

> "Vixi, et, quem dederat cursum fortuna, peregi."[4]

'Tis, indeed, the only comfort I find in my old age, that it mortifies in me several cares and desires wherewith my life has been disturbed; the care how the world goes, the care of riches, of grandeur, of knowledge, of health, of myself. There are men who are learning to speak at a time when they should learn to be silent for ever. A man may always study, but he must not always go to school: what a contemptible thing is an old Abecedarian![5]

> "Diversos diversa juvant; non omnibus annis
> Omnia conveniunt."[6]

If we must study, let us study what is suitable to our

[1] Seneca, Ep. 36.

[2] "When death is close at hand, you have marble cut for use, and, forgetful of the tomb, build houses."—HORACE, *Od.* ii. 17, 18.

[3] "Henceforward I will neither lose nor expect to get: I have more wherewith to defray my journey, than I have way to go."—SENECA, *Ep.* 77.

[4] "I have lived and finished the career Fortune placed before me."—*Æneid*, iv. 653.

[5] Seneca, Ep. 36.

[6] "Various things delight various men; all things are not for all ages."—GALL., *Eleg.*, i. 104.

present condition, that we may answer as he did, who being asked to what end he studied in his decrepit age, "that I may go out better," said he, "and at greater ease." Such a study was that of the younger Cato, feeling his end approach, and which he met with in Plato's Discourse of the Eternity of the Soul: not, as we are to believe, that he was not long before furnished with all sorts of ammunition for such a departure; for of assurance, an established will and instruction, he had more than Plato had in all his writings: his knowledge and courage were in this respect above philosophy; he applied himself to this study, not for the service of his death; but, as a man whose sleeps were never disturbed in the importance of such a deliberation, he also, without choice or change, continued his studies with the other accustomary actions of his life. The night that he was denied the prætorship he spent in play; that wherein he was to die he spent in reading.[1] The loss either of life or of office was all one to him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

OF VIRTUE.

I FIND by experience, that there is a vast difference betwixt the starts and sallies of the soul, and a resolute and constant habit; and very well perceive that there is nothing we may not do, nay, even to the surpassing the Divinity itself, says a certain person,[2] forasmuch as it is more to render a man's self impassible by his own study and industry, than to be so by his natural condition; and even to be able to conjoin to man's imbecility and frailty a God-like resolution and assurance; but it is by fits and starts; and in the lives of those heroes of times past there are sometimes miraculous sallies, and that seem infinitely to exceed our natural force; but they are indeed only sallies: and 'tis

[1] Seneca, Ep. 71 and 104.
[2] Idem, Ep. 73; De Providentia, c. 5.

hard to believe, that these so elevated qualities in a man can so thoroughly tinct and imbue the soul that they should become ordinary, and, as it were, natural in him. It accidentally happens even to us, who are but abortive births of men, sometimes to dart out our souls, when roused by the discourses or examples of others, much beyond their ordinary stretch; but 'tis a kind of passion which pushes and pricks them on, and in some sort ravishes them from themselves: but, this whirlwind once blown over, we see that they insensibly flag and slacken of themselves, if not to the lowest degree, at least so as to be no more the same; insomuch as that upon every trivial occasion, the losing of a hawk, or the breaking of a glass, we suffer ourselves to be moved little less than one of the common people. I am of opinion, that order, moderation, and constancy excepted, all things are to be done by a man that is very imperfect and defective in general. Therefore it is, say the Sages, that to make a right judgment of a man, you are chiefly to pry into his common actions, and surprise him in his everyday habit.

Pyrrho, he who erected so pleasant a knowledge upon ignorance, endeavoured, as all the rest who were really philosophers did, to make his life correspond with his doctrine. And because he maintained the imbecility of human judgment to be so extreme as to be incapable of any choice or inclination, and would have it perpetually wavering and suspended, considering and receiving all things as indifferent, 'tis said,[1] that he always comported himself after the same manner and countenance: if he had begun a discourse, he would always end what he had to say, though the person he was speaking to had gone away: if he walked, he never stopped for any impediment that stood in his way, being preserved from precipices, the jostle of carts, and other like accidents, by the care of his friends: for, to fear or to avoid anything, had been to shock his own propositions, which deprived the senses themselves of all election and certainty. Sometimes he suffered incision and cauteries with so great constancy, as never to be seen so much as to wince. 'Tis something to bring the soul to these imaginations; 'tis

[1] Diogenes Laertius, in vita, ix. 63.

more to join the effects, and yet not impossible; but to conjoin them with such perseverance and constancy as to make them habitual, is certainly, in attempts so remote from the common usage, almost incredible to be done. Therefore it was, that being one day taken in his house terribly scolding with his sister, and being reproached that he therein transgressed his own rules of indifference: "What!" said he, "must this foolish woman also serve for a testimony to my rules?" Another time, being seen to defend himself against a dog: "It is," said he, "very hard totally to put off man; and we must endeavour and force ourselves to resist and encounter things, first by effects, but at least by reason and argument."[1]

About seven or eight years since, a husbandman yet living, but two leagues from my house, having long been tormented with his wife's jealousy, coming one day home from his work, and she welcoming him with her accustomed railing, entered into so great fury that with a sickle he had yet in his hand, he totally cut off all those parts that she was jealous of and threw them in her face. And, 'tis said that a young gentleman of our nation, brisk and amorous, having by his perseverance at last mollified the heart of a fair mistress, enraged, that upon the point of fruition he found himself unable to perform, and that

"Non viriliter
Iners senile penis extulerat caput,"[2]

so soon as ever he came home he deprived himself of the rebellious member, and sent it to his mistress, a cruel and bloody victim for the expiation of his offence. If this had been done upon mature consideration, and upon the account of religion, as the priests of Cybele did, what should we say of so high an action?

A few days since, at Bergerac, within five leagues of my house, up the river Dordogne, a woman having overnight been beaten and abused by her husband, a choleric ill-conditioned fellow, resolved to escape from his ill-usage at the price of her life; and going so soon as she was up the next

[1] Diogenes Laertius, in vita, 66.
[2] Tibullus, Priap. Carm., 84. ("extulit" in the original text.)

morning to visit her neighbours, as she was wont to do, and having let some words fall in recommendation of her affairs, she took a sister of hers by the hand, and led her to the bridge; whither being come, and having taken leave of her, in jest as it were, without any manner of alteration in her countenance, she threw herself headlong from the top into the river, and was there drowned. That which is the most remarkable in this is, that this resolution was a whole night forming in her head.

But it is quite another thing with the Indian women: for it being the custom there for the men to have many wives, and the best beloved of them to kill herself at her husband's decease, every one of them makes it the business of her whole life to obtain this privilege and gain this advantage over her companions; and the good offices they do their husbands aim at no other recompense but to be preferred in accompanying him in death.

"Ubi mortifero jacta est fax ultima lecto,
Uxorum fusis stat pia turba comis:
Et certamen habent lethi, quæ viva sequatur
Conjugium: pudor est non licuisse mori.
Ardent victrices, et flammæ pectora præbent,
Imponuntque suis ora perusta viris."[1]

A certain author of our times reports that he has seen in those Oriental nations this custom in practice, that not only the wives bury themselves with their husbands, but even the slaves he has enjoyed also; which is done after this manner: the husband being dead, the widow may if she will (but few will), demand two or three months' respite wherein to order her affairs. The day being come, she mounts on horseback, dressed as fine as at her wedding, and with a cheerful countenance says she is going to sleep with her spouse, holding a looking-glass in her left hand and an arrow in the other. Being thus conducted in pomp, accompanied with her kindred and friends and a great concourse

[1] "When they threw the torch on the funeral bed, the pious wives, with hair dishevelled, stand around striving which, living, shall accompany her spouse; and are ashamed that they may not die; they who are preferred, expose their breasts to the flame, and their scorched lips embrace those of the dead husband."—PROPERTIUS, iii. 13, 17.

of people in great joy, she is at last brought to the public place appointed for such spectacles: this is a great space, in the midst of which is a pit full of wood, and adjoining to it a mount raised four or five steps, upon which she is brought and served with a magnificent repast; which being done, she falls to dancing and singing, and gives order, when she thinks fit, to kindle the fire. This being done, she descends, and taking the nearest of her husband's relations by the hand, they walk to the river close by, where she strips herself stark naked, and having distributed her clothes and jewels to her friends plunges herself into the water, as if there to cleanse herself from her sins; coming out thence, she wraps herself in a yellow linen of five-and-twenty ells long, and again giving her hand to this kinsman of her husband's, they return back to the mount, where she makes a speech to the people, and recommends her children to them, if she have any. Betwixt the pit and the mount, there is commonly a curtain drawn to screen the burning furnace from their sight, which some of them, to manifest the greater courage, forbid. Having ended what she has to say, a woman presents her with a vessel of oil, wherewith to anoint her head and her whole body, which when done with she throws into the fire, and in an instant precipitates herself after. Immediately, the people throw a great many billets and logs upon her that she may not be long in dying, and convert all their joy into sorrow and mourning. If they are persons of meaner condition, the body of the defunct is carried to the place of sepulture, and there placed sitting, the widow kneeling before him, embracing the dead body; and they continue in this posture whilst the people build a wall about them, which so soon as it is raised to the height of the woman's shoulders, one of her relations comes behind her, and taking hold of her head, twists her neck; so soon as she is dead, the wall is presently raised up, and closed, and there they remain entombed.

There was, in this same country, something like this in their gymnosophists; for not by constraint of others nor by the impetuosity of a sudden humour, but by the express profession of their order, their custom was, so soon as they arrived at a certain age, or that they saw themselves

threatened by any disease, to cause a funeral pile to be erected for them, and on the top a stately bed, where, after having joyfully feasted their friends and acquaintance, they laid them down with so great resolution, that fire being applied to it, they were never seen to stir either hand or foot;[1] and after this manner, one of them, Calanus by name, expired in the presence of the whole army of Alexander the Great.[2] And he was neither reputed holy nor happy amongst them, who did not thus destroy himself, dismissing his soul purged and purified by the fire, after having consumed all that was earthly and mortal. This constant premeditation of the whole life is that which makes the wonder.

Amongst our other controversies, that of *Fatum* has also crept in; and to tie things to come, and even our own wills, to a certain and inevitable necessity, we are yet upon this argument of time past; "Since God foresees that all things shall so fall out, as doubtless He does, it must then necessarily follow, that they must so fall out:" to which our masters reply: "that the seeing anything come to pass, as we do, and as God Himself also does (for all things being present with Him, He rather sees, than foresees) is not to compel an event: that is, we see because things do fall out, but things do not fall out because we see: events cause knowledge, but knowledge does not cause events. That which we see happen, does happen; but it might have happened otherwise: and God, in the catalogue of the causes of events which He has in His prescience, has also those which we call accidental and voluntary, depending upon the liberty. He has given our free will, and knows that we do amiss because we would do so."

I have seen a great many commanders encourage their soldiers with this fatal necessity; for if our time be limited to a certain hour, neither the enemies' shot, nor our own boldness, nor our flight and cowardice, can either shorten or prolong our lives. This is easily said, but see who will be so persuaded; and if it be so that a strong and lively faith draws along with it actions of the same kind, certainly this faith we so much brag of, is very light in this age of

[1] Quintus Curtius, viii. 9.
[2] Plutarch, Life of Alexander, c. 21.

ours, unless the contempt it has of works makes it disdain their company. So it is, that to this very purpose the Sire de Joinville, as credible a witness as any other whatever, tells us of the Bedouins, a nation amongst the Saracens, with whom the king St. Louis had to do in the Holy Land, that they, in their religion, so firmly believed the number of every man's days to be from all eternity prefixed and set down by an inevitable decree, that they went naked to the wars, excepting a Turkish sword, and their bodies only covered with a white linen cloth: and for the greatest curse they could invent when they were angry, this was always in their mouths: "Accursed be thou, as he that arms himself for fear of death." This is a testimony of faith very much beyond ours. And of this sort is that also that two friars of Florence gave in our fathers' days.[1] Being engaged in some controversy of learning, they agreed to go both of them into the fire in the sight of all the people, each for the verification of his argument, and all things were already prepared, and the thing just upon the point of execution, when it was interrupted by an unexpected accident.

A young Turkish lord, having performed a notable exploit in his own person in the sight of both armies, that of Amurath and that of Huniades, ready to join battle, being asked by Amurath, what in such tender and inexperienced years (for it was his first sally into arms) had inspired him with so brave a courage, replied, that his chief tutor for valour was a hare. "For being," said he, "one day a hunting, I found a hare sitting, and though I had a brace of excellent greyhounds with me, yet methought it would be best for sureness to make use of my bow; for she sat very fair. I then fell to letting fly my arrows, and shot forty that I had in my quiver, not only without hurting, but without starting her from her form. At last I slipped my dogs after her, but to no more purpose than I had shot: by which I understood that she had been secured by her destiny; and that neither darts nor swords can wound without the permission of fate, which we can neither hasten nor defer." This story may serve, by the way, to let us see how flexible our reason is to all sorts of images.

[1] 7th April, 1498. One of them was Savonarola.

A person of great years, name, dignity, and learning, boasted to me that he had been induced to a certain very important change in his faith by a strange and whimsical incitation, and one otherwise so inadequate, that I thought it much stronger, taken the contrary way: he called it a miracle, and so I look upon it, but in a different sense. The Turkish historians say, that the persuasion those of their nation have imprinted in them of the fatal and unalterable prescription of their days, manifestly conduces to the giving them great assurance in dangers. And I know a great prince who makes very fortunate use of it, whether it be that he really believes it, or that he makes it his excuse for so wonderfully hazarding himself: let us hope Fortune may not be too soon weary of her favour to him.

There has not happened in our memory a more admirable effect of resolution, than in those two who conspired the death of the Prince of Orange.[1] 'Tis marvellous how the second who executed it, could ever be persuaded into an attempt, wherein his companion, who had done his utmost, had had so ill success; and after the same method, and with the same arms, to go attack a lord, armed with so recent a late lesson of distrust, powerful in followers and bodily strength, in his own hall, amidst his guards, and in a city wholly at his devotion. Assuredly, he employed a very resolute arm and a courage inflamed with furious passion. A poignard is surer for striking home, but by reason that more motion and force of hand is required than with a pistol, the blow is more subject to be put by or hindered. That this man did not run to a certain death, I make no great doubt; for the hopes any one could flatter him withal, could not find place in any sober understanding, and the conduct of his exploit sufficiently manifests that he had no want of that, no more than of courage. The motives of so powerful a persuasion may be diverse, for our fancy does what it will, both with itself and us. The execution that was done near Orleans[2] was nothing like

[1] The first of these was Jehan de Jaureguy, who wounded the prince 18th March, 1582; the second, by whom the prince was killed 10th July, 1584, was Balthazar Gerard.

[2] The murder of the Duke of Guise by Poltrot.

this; there was in this more of chance than vigour; the wound was not mortal, if fortune had not made it so, and to attempt to shoot on horseback, and at a great distance, by one whose body was in motion from the motion of his horse, was the attempt of a man who had rather miss his blow than fail of saving himself. This was apparent from what followed; for he was so astonished and stupefied with the thought of so high an execution, that he totally lost his judgment both to find his way to flight and to govern his tongue. What needed he to have done more than to fly back to his friends across a river? 'Tis what I have done in less dangers, and that I think of very little hazard, how broad soever the river may be, provided your horse have easy going in, and that you see on the other side easy landing according to the stream. The other,[1] when they pronounced his dreadful sentence, "I was prepared for this," said he, "beforehand, and I will make you wonder at my patience."

The Assassins, a nation bordering upon Phœnicia, are reputed amongst the Mohammedans a people of very great devotion, and purity of manners. They hold that the nearest way to gain Paradise is to kill some one of a contrary religion; which is the reason they have often been seen, being but one or two, and without armour, to attempt against powerful enemies, at the price of a certain death and without any consideration of their own danger. So was our Count Raymond of Tripoli assassinated (which word is derived from their name) in the heart of his city,[2] during our enterprises of the Holy War: and likewise Conrad, Marquis of Montserrat,[3] the murderers at their execution bearing themselves with great pride and glory that they had performed so brave an exploit.

[1] Balthazar Gerard.

[2] In 1151.

[3] At Tyre, 24th April, 1192.

CHAPTER XXX.

OF A MONSTROUS CHILD.

THIS story shall go by itself; for I will leave it to physicians to discourse of. Two days ago I saw a child that two men and a nurse, who said they were the father, the uncle, and the aunt of it, carried about to get money by showing it, by reason it was so strange a creature. It was, as to all the rest, of a common form, and could stand upon its feet; could go and gabble much like other children of the same age; it had never as yet taken any other nourishment but from the nurse's breasts, and what, in my presence, they tried to put into the mouth of it it only chewed a little and spat it out again without swallowing; the cry of it seemed indeed a little odd and particular, and it was just fourteen months old. Under the breast it was joined to another child, but without a head and which had the spine of the back without motion, the rest entire; for though it had one arm shorter than the other, it had been broken by accident at their birth; they were joined breast to breast, and as if a lesser child sought to throw its arms about the neck of one something bigger. The juncture and thickness of the place where they were conjoined was not above four fingers, or thereabouts, so that if you thrust up the imperfect child you might see the navel of the other below it, and the joining was betwixt the paps and the navel. The navel of the imperfect child could not be seen, but all the rest of the belly, so that all that was not joined of the imperfect one, as arms, buttocks, thighs, and legs, hung dangling upon the other, and might reach to the midleg. The nurse, moreover, told us that it urined at both bodies, and that the members of the other were nourished, sensible, and in the same plight with that she gave suck to, excepting that they were shorter and less. This double body and several limbs relating to one head might be interpreted a favourable prognostic to the king,[1] of main-

[1] Henry III.

taining these various parts of our state under the union of his laws; but lest the event should prove otherwise, 'tis better to let it alone, for in things already past there needs no divination, "Ut quum facta sunt, tum ad conjecturam aliqua interpretatione revocentur;"[1] as 'tis said of Epimenides, that he always prophesied things past.

I have lately seen a herdsman in Medoc, of about thirty years of age, who has no sign of any genital parts; he has three holes by which he incessantly voids his water; he is bearded, has desire, and covets the society of women.

Those that we call monsters are not so to God, who sees in the immensity of His work the infinite forms that He has comprehended therein; and it is to be believed that this figure which astonishes us has relation to some other figure of the same kind unknown to man. From His all wisdom nothing but good, common, and regular proceeds; but we do not discern the disposition and relation. "Quod crebro videt, non miratur, etiamsi, cur fiat, nescit. Quod ante non vidit, id, si evenerit, ostentum esse censet."[2] Whatever falls out contrary to custom we say is contrary to nature, but nothing, whatever it be, is contrary to her. Let, therefore, this universal and natural reason expel the error and astonishment that novelty brings along with it.

CHAPTER XXXI.

OF ANGER.

PLUTARCH is admirable throughout, but especially where he judges of human actions. What fine things does he say in the comparison of Lycurgus and Numa upon the subject of our great folly in abandoning children to the care and government of their fathers? The most of our civil

[1] "So as when they are come to pass, they should then by some interpretation be recalled to conjecture."—CICERO, *De Divin.*; ii. 31.

[2] "What he often sees he does not admire, though he be ignorant how it comes to pass. But when a thing happens he never saw before, that he looks upon as a portent."—*Idem, ibid.*, ii. 22.

governments, as Aristotle says,[1] leave, after the manner of the Cyclops, to every one the ordering of their wives and children, according to their own foolish and indiscreet fancy; and the Lacedæmonian and Cretan are almost the only governments that have committed the education of children to the laws. Who does not see that in a state all depends upon their nurture and bringing up? and yet they are left to the mercy of parents, let them be as foolish and ill-conditioned as they may, without any manner of discretion.

Amongst other things, how often have I, as I have passed along our streets, had a good mind to get up a farce, to revenge the poor boys whom I have seen flayed, knocked down, and miserably beaten by some father or mother, when in their fury, and mad with rage? You shall see them come out with fire and fury sparkling in their eyes.

> "Rabie jecur incendente, feruntur,
> Præcipites; ut saxa jugis abrupta, quibus mons
> Subtrahitur, clivoque latus pendente recedit,' [2]

(and according to Hippocrates, the most dangerous maladies are they that disfigure the countenance), with a roaring and terrible voice, very often against those that are but newly come from nurse, and there they are lamed and spoiled with blows, whilst our justice takes no cognisance of it, as if these maims and dislocations were not executed upon members of our commonwealth:

> "Gratum est, quod patriæ civem populoque dedisti,
> Si facis, ut patriæ sit idoneus, utilis agris,
> Utilis et bellorum et pacis rebus agendis." [3]

There is no passion that so much transports men from their right judgment as anger. No one would demur

[1] Moral. ad Nicom., x. 9.

[2] "They are headlong borne with burning fury as great stones torn from the mountains, by which the steep sides are left naked and bare."—JUVENAL, *Sat.* vi. 647.

[3] "It is well when to thy country and the people thou hast given a citizen, provided thou make him fit for his country's service; useful to till the earth, useful in affairs of war and peace." —*Idem, ibid.*, xiv. 70.

upon punishing a judge with death who should condemn a criminal on the account of his own choler; why, then, should fathers and pedagogues be any more allowed to whip and chastise children in their anger? 'Tis then no longer correction, but revenge. Chastisement is instead of physic to children; and should we endure a physician who should be animated against and enraged at his patient?

We ourselves, to do well, should never lay a hand upon our servants whilst our anger lasts. When the pulse beats, and we feel emotion in ourselves, let us defer the business; things will indeed appear otherwise to us when we are calm and cool. 'Tis passion that then commands, 'tis passion that speaks, and not we. Faults seen through passion appear much greater to us than they really are, as bodies do when seen through a mist.[1] He who is hungry uses meat; but he who will make use of chastisement should have neither hunger nor thirst to it. And moreover, chastisements that are inflicted with weight and discretion, are much better received and with greater benefit by him who suffers; otherwise, he will not think himself justly condemned by a man transported with anger and fury, and will allege his master's excessive passion, his inflamed countenance, his unwonted oaths, his emotion and precipitous rashness, for his own justification:

> "Ora tument ira, nigrescunt sanguine venæ,
> Lumina Gorgoneo sævius igne micant." [2]

Suetonius reports[3] that Caius Rabirius having been condemned by Cæsar, the thing that most prevailed upon the people (to whom he had appealed) to determine the cause in his favour, was the animosity and vehemence that Cæsar had manifested in that sentence.

Saying is one thing and doing is another; we are to consider the sermon and the preacher distinctly and apart. These men, though they had a pretty business in hand, who in our times have attempted to shake the truth of our Church by the vices of her ministers; she extracts her

[1] Plutarch, That we should Restrain Anger, c. 11.

[2] "Their faces swell, their veins grow black with rage, and their eyes sparkle with Gorgonian fire."—OVID, *De Art. Amandi*, iii. 503.

[3] Life of Cæsar, c. 12

testimony elsewhere; 'tis a foolish way of arguing and that would throw all things into confusion. A man, whose morals are good, may have false opinions, and a wicked man may preach truth, even though he believe it not himself. 'Tis doubtless a fine harmony when doing and saying go together; and I will not deny but that saying, when the actions follow, is not of greater authority and efficacy, as Eudamidas said,[1] hearing a philosopher talk of military affairs: "These things are finely said, but he who speaks them is not to be believed, for his ears have never been used to the sound of the trumpet." And Cleomenes,[2] hearing an orator declaiming upon valour, burst out into laughter, at which the other being angry; "I should," said he to him, "do the same if it were a swallow that spoke of this subject; but if it were an eagle I should willingly hear him." I perceive, methinks, in the writings of the ancients, that he who speaks what he thinks, strikes much more home than he who only feigns. Hear Cicero speak of the love of liberty: hear Brutus speak of it, the mere written words of this man sound as if he would purchase it at the price of his life. Let Cicero, the father of eloquence, treat of the contempt of death; let Seneca do the same: the first languishingly drawls it out, so that you perceive he would make you resolve upon a thing on which he is not resolved himself; he inspires you not with courage, for he himself has none; the other animates and inflames you. I never read an author, even of those who treat of virtue and of actions, that I do not curiously inquire what kind of a man he was himself; for the Ephori at Sparta, seeing a dissolute fellow propose a wholesome advice to the people, commanded him to hold his peace, and entreated a virtuous man to attribute to himself the invention, and to propose it.[3] Plutarch's writings, if well understood, sufficiently bespeak their author, and so that I think I know him even into his soul; and yet I could wish that we had some fuller account of his life. And I am thus far wandered from my subject, upon the account of the obligation I have to Aulus Gellius, for having left us in writing[4] this

[1] Plutarch, Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.
[2] Idem, ibid.
[3] Aulus Gellius, xviii. 3.
[4] Idem, i. 26.

story of his manners, that brings me back to my subject of anger. A slave of his, a vicious, ill-conditioned fellow, but who had the precepts of philosophy often ringing in his ears, having for some offence of his been stript by Plutarch's command, whilst he was being whipped, muttered at first, that it was without cause and that he had done nothing to deserve it; but at last falling in good earnest to exclaim against and rail at his master, he reproached him that he was no philosopher, as he had boasted himself to be: that he had often heard him say it was indecent to be angry, nay, had written a book to that purpose; and that the causing him to be so cruelly beaten, in the height of his rage, totally gave the lie to all his writings, to which Plutarch calmly and coldly answered, "How, ruffian," said he, "by what dost thou judge that I am now angry? Does either my face, my colour, or my voice give any manifestation of my being moved? I do not think my eyes look fierce, that my countenance appears troubled, or that my voice is dreadful; am I red, do I foam, does any word escape my lips I ought to repent? Do I start? Do I tremble with fury? For those, I tell thee, are the true signs of anger." And so, turning to the fellow that was whipping him, "Ply on thy work," said he, whilst this gentleman and I dispute." This is the story.

Archytas Tarentinus, returning from a war wherein he had been captain-general, found all things in his house in very great disorder, and his lands quite out of tillage, through the ill husbandry of his receiver, and having caused him to be called to him; "Go," said he, "if I were not in anger I would soundly drub your sides."[1] Plato likewise, being highly offended with one of his slaves, gave Speusippus order to chastise him, excusing himself from doing it because he was in anger.[2] And Carillus, a Lacedæmonian, to a Helot, who carried himself insolently towards him: "By the Gods," said he, "if I was not angry, I would immediately cause thee to be put to death."[3]

'Tis a passion that is pleased with and flatters itself. How often, being moved under a false cause, if the person

[1] Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., iv. 36. [2] Seneca, De Ira, iii. 12.
[3] Plutarch, Apothegms.

offending makes a good defence and presents us with a just excuse, are we angry against truth and innocence itself? In proof of which, I remember a marvellous example of antiquity.

Piso, otherwise a man of very eminent virtue,[1] being moved against a soldier of his, for that returning alone from forage he could give him no account where he had left a companion of his, took it for granted that he had killed him, and presently condemned him to death. He was no sooner mounted upon the gibbet, but behold his wandering companion arrives, at which all the army were exceedingly glad, and after many embraces of the two comrades, the hangman carried both the one and the other into Piso's presence, all those present believing it would be a great pleasure even to himself; but it proved quite contrary; for through shame and spite, his fury, which was not yet cool, redoubled; and by a subtlety which his passion suddenly suggested to him, he made three criminal for having found one innocent, and caused them all to be despatched: the first soldier, because sentence had passed upon him; the second, who had lost his way, because he was the cause of his companion's death; and the hangman, for not having obeyed the order which had been given him.

Such as have had to do with testy and obstinate women, may have experimented into what a rage it puts them, to oppose silence and coldness to their fury, and that a man disdains to nourish their anger. The orator Celius was wonderfully choleric by nature; and to one who supped in his company, a man of a gentle and sweet conversation, and who, that he might not move him, approved and consented to all he said; he, impatient that his ill humour should thus spend itself without aliment: "For the love of the gods deny me something," said he, "that we may be two."[2] Women, in like manner, are only angry, that others may be angry again, in imitation of the laws of love. Phocion, to one who interrupted his speaking by injurious and very

[1] "Montaigne, for what reason I know not, gives him a better character than Seneca, who, De Ira, lib. i. cap. 16, says, though he was free from many vices that he was ill-tempered and extremely rigorous."—COSTE.

[2] Seneca, De Ira, iii. 8.

opprobrious words, made no other return than silence, and to give him full liberty and leisure to vent his spleen; which he having accordingly done, and the storm blown over, without any mention of this disturbance, he proceeded in his discourse where he had left off before.[1] No answer can nettle a man like such a contempt.

Of the most choleric man in France (anger is always an imperfection, but more excusable in a soldier, for in that trade it cannot sometimes be avoided) I often say, that he is the most patient man that I know, and the most discreet in bridling his passions; which rise in him with so great violence and fury,

> "Magno veluti cum flamma sonore
> Virgea suggeritur costis undantis aheni
> Exsultantque æstu latices, furit intus aquai
> Fumidus atque altè spumis exuberat amnis,
> Nec jam se capit unda; volat vapor ater ad auras."[2]

that he must of necessity cruelly constrain himself to moderate it. And for my part, I know no passion which I could with so much violence to myself attempt to cover and conceal: I would not set wisdom at so high a price; and do not so much consider what a man does, as how much it costs him to do no worse.

Another boasted himself to me of the regularity and sweetness of his manners, which are in truth, very singular; to whom I replied, that it was indeed something, especially in persons of so eminent a quality as himself, upon whom every one had their eyes, to present himself always well-tempered to the world; but that the principal thing was to make provision for within and for himself; and that it was not, in my opinion, very well to order his business inwardly to grate himself, which I was afraid he did, in putting on and outwardly maintaining this visor and regular appearance.

[1] Plutarch, Instructions for those who manage State Affairs, c. 10.

[2] "When with loud crackling noise, a fire of sticks is applied to the boiling caldron's side, by the heat in frisky bells the liquor dances; but within the water rages, and high the smoky fluid in foam overflows. Nor can the wave now contain itself: in pitchy steam it flies all abroad."—*Æneid*, vii. 462.

A man incorporates anger by concealing it, as Diogenes told Demosthenes, who, for fear of being seen in a tavern, withdrew himself the more retiredly into it: "The more you retire, the farther you enter in."[1] I would rather advise that a man should give his servant a box of the ear a little unseasonably, than rack his fancy to present this grave and composed countenance; and had rather discover my passions than brood over them at my own expense; they grow less in venting and manifesting themselves; and 'tis much better their point should wound others without, than be turned towards ourselves within. "Omnia vitia in aperto leviora sunt: et tunc perniciosissima, quum, simulata sanitate, subsidunt."[2] I admonish all those who have authority to be angry in my family, in the first place to manage their anger and not to lavish it upon every occasion, for that both lessens the value and hinders the effect: rash and incessant scolding runs into custom, and renders itself despised; and what you lay out upon a servant for a theft, is not felt, because it is the same he has seen you a hundred times employ against him for having ill washed a glass, or set a stool out of place. Secondly, that they be not angry to no purpose, but make sure that their reprehension reach him with whom they are offended; for, ordinarily, they rail and bawl before he comes into their presence, and continue scolding an age after he is gone;

"Et secum petulans amentia certat:"[3]

they attack his shadow, and drive the storm in a place where no one is either chastised or concerned, but in the clamour of their voice. I likewise in quarrels condemn those who huff and vapour without an enemy: those rodomontades should be reserved to discharge upon the offending party:

"Mugitus veluti cum prima in prælia taurus
Terrificos ciet, atque irasci in cornua tentat,

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[1] Diogenes Laertius, Life of Diogenes the Cynic, vi. 34.

[2] "All vices are less dangerous when open to be seen, and then most pernicious when they lurk under a dissembled good nature."—SENECA, *Ep.*, 56.

[3] "And petulant madness contends with itself."—CLAUDIAN, in *Eutrop.*, i. 237.

Arboris obnixus trunco, ventosque lacessit
Ictibus, et sparsa ad pugnam proludit arena."[1]

When I am angry, my anger is very sharp but withal very short, and as private as I can; I lose myself indeed in promptness and violence, but not in trouble; so that I throw out all sorts of injurious words at random, and without choice, and never consider pertinently to dart my language where I think it will deepest wound, for I commonly make use of no other weapon in my anger than my tongue. My servants have a better bargain of me in great occasions than in little; the light ones surprise me; and the mischief on't is, that when you are once upon the precipice, 'tis no matter who gave you the push, for you always go to the bottom; the fall urges, moves, and makes haste of itself. In great occasions this satisfies me, that they are so just every one expects a reasonable indignation, and then I glorify myself in deceiving their expectation; against these, I fortify and prepare myself; they disturb my head, and threaten to transport me very far, should I follow them. I can easily contain myself from entering into one of these passions, and am strong enough, when I expect them, to repel their violence, be the cause never so great; but if a passion once prepossess and seize me, it carries me away, be the cause never so small. I bargain thus with those who may contend with me; when you see me moved first, let me alone, right or wrong; I'll do the same for you. The storm is only begot by a concurrence of angers, which easily spring from one another, and are not born together. Let every one have his own way, and we shall be always at peace. A profitable advice, but hard to execute. Sometimes also it falls out that I put on a seeming anger, for the better governing of my house, without any real emotion. As age renders my humours more sharp, I study to oppose them, and will, if I can, order it so, that for the future I may be so much the less peevish and hard to please, as I have more excuse and inclination to be so, although I have

[1] "As when a bull to usher in the fight makes dreadful bellowings, and whets his horns against the trunk of a tree; with blows he beats the air, and preludes to the fight by spurning the sand." —*Æneid*, xii. 103.

heretofore been reckoned amongst those who have the greatest patience.

A word more to conclude this chapter. Aristotle says,[1] that anger sometimes serves for arms to virtue and valour. 'Tis likely it may be so, nevertheless, they who contradict him[2] pleasantly answer, that 'tis a weapon of novel use, for we move all other arms, this moves us; our hands guide it not, 'tis it that guides our hands; it holds us, we hold not it.

CHAPTER XXXII.

DEFENCE OF SENECA AND PLUTARCH.

THE familiarity I have with these two authors, and the assistance they have lent to my age and to my book, wholly compiled of what I have borrowed from them, oblige me to stand up for their honour.

As to Seneca, amongst a million of little pamphlets that those of the so-called reformed religion disperse abroad for the defence of their cause (and which sometimes proceed from so good a hand, that 'tis pity his pen is not employed in a better subject), I have formerly seen one, that to make up the parallel he would fain find out betwixt the government of our late poor King Charles IX., and that of Nero, compares the late Cardinal of Lorraine with Seneca; their fortunes, in having both of them been the prime ministers in the government of their princes, and in their manners, conditions, and deportments to have been very near alike. Wherein, in my opinion, he does the said cardinal a very great honour; for though I am one of those who have a very high esteem for his wit, eloquence, and zeal to religion and the service of his king, and his good fortune to have lived in an age wherein it was so novel, so rare, and also so necessary for the public good to have an ecclesiastical person of such high birth and dignity, and so sufficient and capable of his place; yet, to confess the truth, I do not

[1] Moral. ad Nicom., iii. 8. [2] Seneca, De Ira, i. 16.

think his capacity by many degrees near to the other, nor his virtue either so clean, entire, or steady, as that of Seneca.

Now the book whereof I speak, to bring about its design, gives a very injurious description of Seneca, having borrowed its reproaches from Dion the historian, whose testimony I do not at all believe: for besides that he is inconsistent, that after having called Seneca one while very wise, and again a mortal enemy to Nero's vices, makes him elsewhere avaricious, an usurer, ambitious, effeminate, voluptuous, and a false pretender to philosophy, his virtue appears so vivid and vigorous in his writings, and his vindication is so clear from any of these imputations, as of his riches and extraordinarily expensive way of living, that I cannot believe any testimony to the contrary. And besides, it is much more reasonable to believe the Roman historians in such things than Greeks and foreigners. Now Tacitus[1] and the rest speak very honourably both of his life and death; and represent him to us a very excellent and virtuous person in all things; and I will allege no other reproach against Dion's report but this, which I cannot avoid, namely, that he has so weak a judgment in the Roman affairs, that he dares to maintain Julius Cæsar's cause against Pompey, and that of Antony against Cicero.

Let us now come to Plutarch: Jean Bodin is a good author of our times, and a writer of much greater judgment than the rout of scribblers of his age, and who deserves to be carefully read and considered. I find him, though, a little bold in this passage of his Method of history, where he accuses Plutarch not only of ignorance (wherein I would have let him alone: for that is beyond my criticism) but that he "often writes things incredible, and absolutely fabulous:" these are his own words. If he had simply said, that he had delivered things otherwise than they really are, it had been no great reproach; for what we have not seen, we are forced to receive from other hands, and take upon trust, and I see that he purposely sometimes variously relates the same story; as the judgment of the

[1] Tacitus, Annals, xiii. 11; xiv. 53-55; xv. 60-64. Tacitus, however, relates several circumstances as to Seneca which are very censurable.

three best captains that ever were, given by Hannibal; 'tis one way in the Life of Flaminius, and another in that of Pyrrhus. But to charge him with having taken incredible and impossible things for current pay, is to accuse the most judicious author in the world of want of judgment. And this is his example; "as," says he, "when he relates that a Lacedæmonian boy suffered his bowels to be torn out by a fox-cub he had stolen, and kept it still concealed under his coat till he fell down dead, rather than he would discover his theft."[1] I find, in the first place, this example ill chosen, forasmuch as it is very hard to limit the power of the faculties of the soul, whereas we have better authority to limit and know the force of the bodily limbs; and therefore, if I had been he, I should rather have chosen an example of this second sort; and there are some of these less credible: and amongst others, that which he relates of Pyrrhus, that "all wounded as he was, he struck one of his enemies, who was armed from head to foot, so great a blow with his sword, that he clave him down from his crown to his seat, so that the body was divided into two parts."[2] In this example I find no great miracle, nor do I admit the salvo with which he excuses Plutarch, where he added these words, "as 'tis said," to suspend our belief; for unless it be in things received by authority, and the reverence to antiquity or religion, he would never have himself admitted, or enjoined us to believe things incredible in themselves; and that these words, "as 'tis said," are not put in this place to that effect, is easy to be seen, because he elsewhere relates to us, upon this subject, of the patience of the Lacedæmonian children, examples happening in his time, more unlikely to prevail upon our faith; as what Cicero has also testified[3] before him, as having, as he says, been upon the spot: that even to their times there were children found who, in the trial of patience they were put to before the altar of Diana, suffered themselves to be there whipped till the blood ran down all over their bodies, not only without crying out, but without so much as a groan, and some till they there voluntarily lost their lives:

[1] Life of Lycurgus, c. 14. [2] Life of Pyrrhus, c. 12.
[3] Tusc. Quæs., ii. 14, v. 27.

and that which Plutarch also, amongst a hundred other witnesses, relates, that at a sacrifice, a burning coal having fallen into the sleeve of a Lacedæmonian boy, as he was censing, he suffered his whole arm to be burned, till the smell of the broiling flesh was perceived by those present. There was nothing, according to their custom, wherein their reputation was more concerned, nor for which they were to undergo more blame and disgrace, than in being taken in theft. I am so fully satisfied of the greatness of those people, that his story does not only not appear to me, as to Bodin, incredible; but I do not find it so much as rare and strange. The Spartan history is full of a thousand more cruel and rare examples; and is, indeed, all miracle in this respect.

Marcellinus, concerning theft, reports[1] that in his time there was no sort of torments which could compel the Egyptians, when taken in this act, though a people very much addicted to it, so much as to tell their name.

A Spanish peasant, being put to the rack as to the accomplices of the murder of the Prætor Lucius Piso, cried out in the height of the torment, "that his friends should not leave him, but look on in all assurance; and that no pain had the power to force from him one word of confession," which was all they could get the first day. The next day, as they were leading him a second time to another trial, strongly disengaging himself from the hands of his guards, he furiously ran his head against a wall, and beat out his brains.[2]

Epicharis, having tired and glutted the cruelty of Nero's satellites and undergone their fire, their beating, their racks a whole day together, without one syllable of confession of her conspiracy; being the next day brought again to the rack, with her limbs almost torn to pieces, conveyed the lace of her robe with a running noose over one of the arms of her chair, and suddenly slipping her head into it, with the weight of her own body hanged herself.[3] Having the courage to die in that manner, is it not to be presumed that she purposely lent her life to the trial of her fortitude the

[1] Lib. xxii. cap. 16. [2] Tacitus, Annals, iv. 45.
[3] Idem, ibid., xv. 57.

day before, to mock the tyrant, and encourage others to the like attempt?

And whoever will inquire of our troopers the experiences they have had in our civil wars, will find effects of patience and obstinate resolution in this miserable age of ours, and amongst this rabble even more effeminate than the Egyptians, worthy to be compared with those we have just related of the Spartan virtue.

I know there have been simple peasants amongst us who have endured the soles of their feet to be broiled upon a gridiron, their finger-ends to be crushed with the cock of a pistol, and their bloody eyes squeezed out of their heads by force of a cord twisted about their brows, before they would so much as consent to a ransom. I have seen one left stark naked for dead in a ditch, his neck black and swollen, with a halter yet about it with which they had dragged him all night at a horse's tail, his body wounded in a hundred places, with stabs of daggers that had been given him, not to kill him, but to put him to pain and to affright him, who had endured all this, and even to being speechless and insensible, resolved, as he himself told me, rather to die a thousand deaths (as indeed, as to matter of suffering, he already had) before he would pay a penny; and yet he was one of the richest husbandmen of all the country. How many have been seen patiently to suffer themselves to be burnt and roasted for opinions taken upon trust from others, and by them not at all understood? I have known a hundred and a hundred women (for Gascony has a certain prerogative for obstinacy) whom you might sooner have made eat fire than forsake an opinion they had conceived in anger. They are all the more exasperated by blows and constraint. And he that made the story of the woman who, in defiance of all correction, threats, and bastinadoes, ceased not to call her husband lousy knave; and who being plunged over head and ears in water, yet lifted her hands above her head and made a sign of cracking lice, feigned a tale of which, in truth, we every day see a manifest image in the obstinacy of women. And obstinacy is the sister of constancy, at least in vigour and stability.

We are not to judge what is possible and what is not.

according to what is credible and incredible to our apprehension, as I have said elsewhere;[1] and it is a great fault, and yet one that most men are guilty of, which, nevertheless, I do not mention with any reflection upon Bodin, to make a difficulty of believing that in another which they could not or would not do themselves. Every one thinks that the sovereign stamp of human nature is imprinted in him, and that from it all others must take their rule; and that all proceedings which are not like his are feigned and false. What brutal stupidity! Is anything of another's actions or faculties proposed to him? the first thing he calls to the consultation of his judgment is his own example; and as matters go with him, so they must of necessity do with all the world besides. O dangerous and intolerable folly! For my part, I consider some men as infinitely beyond me, especially amongst the ancients, and yet, though I clearly discern my inability to come near them by a thousand paces, I do not forbear to keep them in sight, and to judge of what so elevates them, of which I perceive some seeds in myself, as I also do of the extreme meanness of some other minds, which I neither am astonished at nor yet misbelieve. I very well perceive the turns those great souls take to raise themselves to such a pitch, and admire their grandeur; and those flights that I think the bravest I could be glad to imitate; where, though I want wing, yet my judgment readily goes along with them.

The other example he introduces of "things incredible and wholly fabulous," delivered by Plutarch,[2] is, that "Agesilaus was fined by the Ephori for having wholly engrossed the hearts and affections of his citizens to himself alone." And herein I do not see what sign of falsity is to be found: clearly Plutarch speaks of things that must needs be better known to him than to us; and it was no new thing in Greece to see men punished and exiled for this very thing of being too acceptable to the people; witness the Ostracism and Petalism.[3]

There is yet in this place another accusation laid against Plutarch which I cannot well digest, where Bodin says that

[1] Book i. chap. 26. [2] Life of Agesilaus, c. 1.

[3] Ostracism, at Athens, was banishment for ten years; Petalism, at Syracuse, was banishment for five years.

he has sincerely paralleled Romans with Romans, and Greeks amongst themselves, but not Romans with Greeks; witness, says he, Demosthenes and Cicero, Cato and Aristides, Sylla and Lysander, Marcellus and Pelopidas, Pompey and Agesilaus, holding that he has favoured the Greeks in giving them so unequal companions. This is really to attack what in Plutarch is most excellent and most to be commended: for in his parallels (which is the most admirable part of all his works, and with which, in my opinion, he is himself the most pleased) the fidelity and sincerity of his judgments equal their depth and weight: he is a philosopher who teaches us virtue. Let us see whether we cannot defend him from this reproach of falsity and prevarication. All that I can imagine could give occasion to this censure is the great and shining lustre of the Roman names which we have in our minds; it does not seem likely to us that Demosthenes could rival the glory of a consul, proconsul, and prætor of that great Republic; but if a man consider the truth of the thing, and the men in themselves, which is Plutarch's chiefest aim, and will rather balance their manners, their natures, and parts, than their fortunes, I think, contrary to Bodin, that Cicero and the elder Cato come far short of the men with whom they are compared. I should sooner, for his purpose, have chosen the example of the younger Cato compared with Phocion, for in this couple there would have been a more likely disparity, to the Roman's advantage. As to Marcellus, Sylla, and Pompey, I very well discern that their exploits of war are greater and more full of pomp and glory than those of the Greeks, whom Plutarch compares with them: but the bravest and most virtuous actions, any more in war than elsewhere, are not always the most renowned. I often see the names of captains obscured by the splendour of other names of less desert; witness Labienus, Ventidius, Telesinus, and several others. And to take it by that, were I to complain on the behalf of the Greeks, could I not say, that Camillus was much less comparable to Themistocles, the Gracchi to Agis and Cleomenes and Numa to Lycurgus? But 'tis folly to judge, at one view, of things that have so many aspects. When Plutarch compares them, he does not, for all that, make them equal; who

could more learnedly and sincerely have marked their distinctions? Does he parallel the victories, feats of arms, the force of the armies conducted by Pompey, and his triumphs, with those of Agesilaus? "I do not believe," says he,[1] "that Xenophon himself, if he were now living, though he were allowed to write whatever pleased him to the advantage of Agesilaus, would dare to bring them into comparison." Does he speak of paralleling Lysander to Sylla. "There is," says he, "no comparison, either in the number of victories, or in the hazard of battles, for Lysander only gained two naval battles," &c.[2] This is not to derogate from the Romans; for having only simply named them with the Greeks, he can have done them no injury, what disparity soever there may be betwixt them: and Plutarch does not entirely oppose them to one another; there is no preference in general; he only compares the pieces and circumstances, one after another, and gives of every one a particular and separate judgment. Wherefore if any one could convict him of partiality, he ought to pick out some one of those particular judgments, or say, in general, that he was mistaken in comparing such a Greek to such a Roman, when there were others more fit and better resembling to parallel him to.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE STORY OF SPURINA.

PHILOSOPHY thinks she has not ill employed her talent, when she has given the sovereignty of the soul and the authority of restraining our appetites, to reason. Amongst which, they who judge that there is none more violent than those which spring from love, have this opinion also, that they seize both body and soul, and possess the whole man, so that even health itself depends upon them, and medicine is sometimes constrained to pimp for them; but one might,

[1] Parallel of Pompey and Agesilaus.
[2] Parallel of Sylla and Lysander.

on the contrary also say, that the mixture of the body brings an abatement and weakening; for such desires are subject to satiety, and capable of material remedies.

Many, being determined to rid their soul from the continual alarms of this appetite, have made use of incision and amputation of the rebelling members; others have subdued their force and ardour by the frequent application of cold things, as snow and vinegar. The sackcloths of our ancestors were for this purpose, which is cloth woven of horse-hair, of which some of them made shirts, and others girdles, to torture and correct their reins. A prince, not long ago, told me, that in his youth, upon a solemn festival in the court of King Francis I., where everybody was very finely dressed, he would needs put on his father's hair shirt, which was still kept in the house; but how great soever his devotion was, he had not patience to wear it till night, and was sick a long time after; adding withal, that he did not think there could be any youthful heat so fierce that the use of this recipe would not mortify, and yet perhaps he never essayed the most violent; for experience shows us, that such emotions are often seen under rude and slovenly clothes, and that a hair shirt does not always render those chaste who wear it.[1]

Xenocrates proceeded with greater rigour in this affair; for his disciples, to make trial of his continency, having slipt Lais, that beautiful and famous courtesan, into his bed, quite naked, excepting the arms of her beauty and her wanton allurements, her philters, finding, that in despite of his reason and philosophical rules, his unruly flesh began to mutiny, he caused those members of his to be burned that he found consenting to this rebellion.[2] Whereas the passions which wholly reside in the soul, as ambition, avarice, and the rest, find the reason much more to do, because it cannot there be helped but by its own means; neither are those appetites capable of satiety, but grow sharper and increase by fruition.

[1] In the original there is a play on the words *haire* and *hère*, the former meaning a cilice or hair shirt, derived from a coarse habit worn by the people of Cilicia, and the latter a poor, feeble creature, *un pauvre hère*.

[2] Diogenes Laertius, in vita, iv. 7.

The sole example of Julius Cæsar may suffice to demonstrate to us the disparity of these appetites; for never was man more addicted to amorous delights than he: of which one testimony is the peculiar care he had of his person, to such a degree, as to make use of the most lascivious means to that end then in use, as to have all the hairs of his body twitched off, and to wipe all over with perfumes with the extremest nicety.[1] And he was a beautiful person in himself, of a fair complexion, tall, and sprightly, full faced, with quick hazel eyes, if we may believe Suetonius; for the statues of him that we see at Rome do not in all points answer this description. Besides his wives, whom he four times changed, without reckoning the amours of his boyhood with Nicomedes, king of Bithynia, he had the maidenhead of the renowned Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, witness the little Cæsario whom he had by her.[2] He also made love to Eunoe,[3] queen of Mauritania; and at Rome, to Posthumia, the wife of Servius Sulpitius; to Lollia, the wife of Gabinius; to Tertulla, the wife of Crassus, and even to Mutia, wife to the great Pompey: which was the reason, the Roman historians say, that she was repudiated by her husband, which Plutarch confesses to be more than he knew; and the Curios, both father and son, afterwards reproached Pompey, when he married Cæsar's daughter, that he had made himself son-in-law to a man who had made him cuckold, and one whom he himself was wont to call Ægisthus. Besides all these, he entertained Servilia, Cato's sister and mother to Marcus Brutus, whence, every one believes, proceeded the great affection he had to Brutus, by reason that he was born at a time when it was likely he might be his son. So that I have reason, methinks, to take him for a man extremely given to this debauch, and of a very amorous constitution. But the other passion of ambition, with which he was exceedingly infected, arising in him to contend with the former, it was soon compelled to give way.

And here calling to mind Mohammed, who won Constantinople, and finally exterminated the Grecian name, I

[1] Suetonius, in vita, c. 45. [2] Plutarch, Life of Cæsar, c. 13.
[3] Suetonius, *ubi supra*, c. 50, &c.

do not know where these two passions were so evenly balanced; equally an indefatigable lecher and soldier: but where they both meet in his life and jostle one another, the quarrelling passion always gets the better of the amorous one; and this, though it was out of its natural season, never regained an absolute sovereignty over the other till he had arrived at an extreme old age, and unable to undergo the fatigues of war.

What is related for a contrary example, of Ladislaus, king of Naples, is very remarkable; that being a great captain, valiant and ambitious, he proposed to himself for the principal end of his ambition, the execution of his pleasure and the enjoyment of some rare and excellent beauty. His death sealed up all the rest: for having by a close and tedious siege reduced the city of Florence to so great distress that the inhabitants were compelled to capitulate about surrender, he was content to let them alone, provided they would deliver up to him a beautiful maid he had heard of in their city; they were forced to yield to it, and by a private injury to avert the public ruin. She was the daughter of a famous physician of his time, who, finding himself involved in so foul a necessity, resolved upon a high attempt. As every one was lending a hand to trick up his daughter and to adorn her with ornaments and jewels to render her more agreeable to this new lover, he also gave her a handkerchief most richly wrought, and of an exquisite perfume, an implement they never go without in those parts, which she was to make use of at their first approaches. This handkerchief, poisoned with his greatest art, coming to be rubbed between the chafed flesh and open pores, both of the one and the other, so suddenly infused the poison, that immediately converting their warm into a cold sweat they presently died in one another's arms.[1]

But I return to Cæsar. His pleasures never made him steal one minute of an hour, nor go one step aside from occasions that might any way conduce to his advancement. This passion was so sovereign in him over all the rest, and

[1] See as to this adventure, which is highly problematical, Sismondi's Hist. des Republiques Italiennes, viii. 210.

with so absolute authority possessed his soul, that it guided him at pleasure. In truth, this troubles me, when, as to everything else, I consider the greatness of this man, and the wonderful parts wherewith he was endued; learned to that degree in all sorts of knowledge that there is hardly any one science of which he has not written;[1] so great an orator that many have preferred his eloquence to that of Cicero, and he, I conceive, did not think himself inferior to him in that particular, for his two anti-Catos were written to counterbalance the elocution that Cicero had expended in his Cato. As to the rest, was ever soul so vigilant, so active, and so patient of labour as his? and, doubtless, it was embellished with many rare seeds of virtue, lively, natural, and not put on; he was singularly sober; so far from being delicate in his diet, that Oppius relates,[2] how that having one day at table set before him medicated instead of common oil in some sauce, he ate heartily of it, that he might not put his entertainer out of countenance. Another time he caused his baker to be whipped for serving him with a finer than ordinary sort of bread.[3] Cato himself was wont to say of him, that he was the first sober man who ever made it his business to ruin his country.[4] And as to the same Cato's calling him one day drunkard, it fell out thus: being both of them in the Senate, at a time when Catiline's conspiracy was in question, of which Cæsar was suspected, one came and brought him a letter sealed up. Cato believing that it was something the conspirators gave him notice of, required him to deliver it into his hand, which Cæsar was constrained to do, to avoid farther suspicion. It was by chance a love-letter that Servilia, Cato's sister, had written to him which, Cato having read, he threw it back to him, saying, "There, drunkard."[5] This, I say, was rather a word of disdain and anger than an express reproach of this vice, as we often rate those who anger us with the first injurious words that come into our mouths, though nothing due to those we are offended at; to which may be added that the vice which Cato cast in his dish is wonderfully near akin to that

[1] Suetonius, in vita, c. 55, 56.
[2] Idem, ibid., c. 53.
[3] Idem, ibid., c. 48.
[4] Idem, ibid., c. 53.
[5] Plutarch, Life of Cato, c. 7.

wherein he had trapped Cæsar; for Bacchus and Venus, according to the proverb, very willingly agree; but with me Venus is most sprightly when I am the most sober.

The examples of his sweetness and clemency to those by whom he had been offended are infinite; I mean, besides those he gave during the time of the civil wars, which, as plainly enough appears by his writings, he practised to cajole his enemies, and to make them less afraid of his future dominion and victory. But I must also say, that if these examples are not sufficient proofs of his natural sweetness,[1] they, at least, manifest a marvellous confidence and grandeur of courage in this person. He has often been known to dismiss whole armies, after having overcome them, to his enemies, without ransom, or deigning so much as to bind them by oath, if not to favour him, at least no more to bear arms against him; he has three or four times taken some of Pompey's captains prisoners, and as often set them at liberty. Pompey declared all those to be enemies who did not follow him to the war; he proclaimed all those to be his friends who sat still and did not actually take arms against him.[2] To such captains of his as ran away from him to go over to the other side, he sent, moreover, their arms, horses, and equipage: the cities he had taken by force he left at full liberty to follow which side they pleased, imposing no other garrison upon them but the memory of his gentleness and clemency. He gave strict and express charge, the day of his great battle of Pharsalia, that, without the utmost necessity, no one should lay a hand upon the citizens of Rome.[3] These, in my opinion, were very hazardous proceedings, and 'tis no wonder if those in our civil war, who, like him, fight against the ancient estate of their country, do not follow his example; they are extraordinary means, and that only appertain to Cæsar's fortune, and to his admirable foresight in the conduct of affairs. When I consider the incomparable grandeur of his soul, I excuse victory that it could not disengage itself from him, even in so unjust and so wicked a cause.

[1] "Montaigne, in book ii. c. 11, writes with greater justice of this affected clemency of Cæsar."—LE CLERC.

[2] Suetonius, in vita, c. 75. [3] Idem, ibid., c. 75.

To return to his clemency: we have many striking examples in the time of his government, when, all things being reduced to his power, he had no more need to dissemble. Caius Memmius had written very severe orations against him, which he had as sharply answered: yet he did not soon after forbear to use his interest to make him consul.[1] Caius Calvus, who had composed several injurious epigrams against him, having employed many of his friends to mediate a reconciliation with him, Cæsar voluntarily persuaded himself to write first to him. And our good Catullus, who had so rudely ruffled him under the name of Mamurra,[2] coming to offer his excuses to him, he made the same day sit at his table.[3] Having intelligence of some who spoke ill of him, he did no more, but only by a public oration declare that he had notice of it. He still less feared his enemies than he hated them; some conspiracies and cabals that were made against his life being discovered to him, he satisfied himself in publishing by proclamation that they were known to him, without further prosecuting the conspirators.[4]

As to the respect he had for his friends: Caius Oppius, being with him upon a journey, and finding himself ill, he left him the only lodging he had for himself, and lay all night upon the hard ground in the open air.[5] As to what concerns his justice, he put a beloved servant of his to death for lying with a noble Roman's wife, though there was no complaint made.[6] Never had man more moderation in his victory, nor more resolution in his adverse fortune.

But all these good inclinations were stifled and spoiled by his furious ambition, by which he suffered himself to be so transported and misled that one may easily maintain, that this passion was the rudder of all his actions: of a liberal man, it made him a public thief to supply this bounty and profusion, and made him utter this vile and unjust saying, "That if the most wicked and profligate persons in the world had been faithful in serving him towards his advancement, he would cherish and prefer them to the utmost of his power, as much as the best of

[1] Suetonius, in vita, c. 73.
[2] Catullus, Carm., 29.
[3] Suetonius, in vita, 73.
[4] Idem, ibid.
[5] Idem, ibid., 72.
[6] Idem, ibid., 48.

men."[1] It intoxicated him with so excessive a vanity, as to dare to boast in the presence of his fellow-citizens, that he had made the great commonwealth of Rome a name without form and without body; and to say that his answers for the future should stand for laws;[2] and also to receive the body of the Senate coming to him, sitting; to suffer himself to be adored, and to have divine honours paid to him[3] in his own presence. To conclude, this sole vice, in my opinion, spoiled in him the most rich and beautiful nature that ever was, and has rendered his name abominable to all good men, in that he would erect his glory upon the ruins of his country and the subversion of the greatest and most flourishing republic the world shall ever see.

There might, on the contrary, many examples be produced of great men whom pleasures have made to neglect the conduct of their affairs, as Mark Antony and others; but where love and ambition should be in equal balance, and come to jostle, with equal forces, I make no doubt but the last would win the prize.

To return to my subject; 'tis much to bridle our appetites by the argument of reason, or, by violence, to contain our members within their duty: but to lash ourselves for our neighbour's interest, and not only to divest ourselves of the charming passion that tickles us, of the pleasure we feel in being agreeable to others, and courted and beloved of every one, but also to conceive a hatred against the graces that produce that effect, and to condemn our beauty because it inflames others; of this, I confess, I have met with few examples. But this is one. Spurina, a young man of Tuscany,

> "Qualis gemma micat, fulvum quæ dividit aurum,
> Aut collo decus, aut capiti: vel quale per artem
> Inclusum buxo, aut Oricia terebintho
> Lucet ebur,"[4]

being endowed with a singular beauty, and so excessive, that the chastest eyes could not chastely behold its rays;

[1] Suetonius, in vita, 72. [2] Idem, ibid., 77.
[3] Idem, ibid., 78.
[4] "As a gem shines enchased in yellow gold, an ornament on the neck or head, or as ivory has lustre, set by art in boxwood or Orician ebony."—*Æneid*, x. 134.

not contenting himself with leaving so much flame and fever as he everywhere kindled without relief, entered into a furious spite against himself and those great endowments nature had so liberally conferred upon him, as if a man were responsible to himself for the faults of others, and purposely slashed and disfigured, with many wounds and scars, the perfect symmetry and proportion that nature had so curiously imprinted in his face.[1] To give my free opinion, I more admire than honour such actions: such excesses are enemies to my rules. The design was conscientious and good, but certainly a little defective in prudence. What! if his deformity served afterwards to make others guilty of the sin of hatred or contempt; or of envy at the glory of so rare a recommendation; or of calumny, interpreting this humour a mad ambition! Is there any form from which vice cannot, if it will, extract occasion to exercise itself, one way or another? It had been more just, and also more noble, to have made of these gifts of God a subject of exemplary regularity and virtue.

They who retire themselves from the common offices, from that infinite number of troublesome rules that fetter a man of exact honesty in civil life, are in my opinion very discreet, what peculiar sharpness of constraint soever they impose upon themselves in so doing. 'Tis in some sort a kind of dying to avoid the pain of living well. They may have another reward; but the reward of difficulty I fancy they can never have; nor, in uneasiness, that there can be anything more or better done than the keeping oneself upright amid the waves of the world, truly and exactly performing all parts of our duty. 'Tis, peradventure, more easy to keep clear of the sex, than to maintain one's self aright in all points in the society of a wife; and a man may with less trouble adapt himself to entire abstinence, than to the due dispensation of abundance. Use, carried on according to reason, has in it more of difficulty than abstinence; moderation is a virtue that gives more work than suffering; the well living of Scipio has a thousand fashions, that of Diogenes but one; this as much excels the ordinary lives in innocence, as the most accomplished excel them in utility and force.

[1] Valerius Maximus, v. ex 1.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

OBSERVATION ON THE MEANS TO CARRY ON A WAR ACCORDING TO JULIUS CÆSAR.

'Tis related of many great leaders that they have had certain books in particular esteem, as Alexander the Great, Homer; Scipio Africanus, Xenophon; Marcus Brutus, Polybius; Charles V., Philip de Comines; and 'tis said that, in our times, Machiavelli is elsewhere still in repute: but the late Marshal Strozzi, who took Cæsar for his man, doubtless made the best choice, seeing that his book indeed ought to be the breviary of every soldier, as being the true and most excellent pattern of all military art. And, moreover, God knows with what grace and beauty he has embellished that rich matter, with so pure, delicate, and perfect expression, that, in my opinion, there are no writings in the world comparable to his, as to that business.

I will set down some rare and particular passages of his wars, that remain in my memory.

His army, being in some consternation upon the rumour that was spread of the great forces that King Juba was leading against him, instead of abating the apprehension which his soldiers had conceived at the news and of lessening to them the forces of the enemy, having called them all together to encourage and reassure them, he took a quite contrary way to what we are used to do, for he told them that they need no more trouble themselves with inquiring after the enemy's forces, for that he was certainly informed thereof, and then told them of a number much surpassing both the truth and the report that was current in his army;[1] following the advice of Cyrus in Xenophon, forasmuch as the deception is not of so great importance to find an enemy weaker than we expected, than to find him really very strong, after having been made to believe that he was weak.

[1] Suetonius, in vita, 66.

It was always his use to accustom his soldiers simply to obey, without taking upon them to control, or so much as to speak of their captain's designs, which he never communicated to them but upon the point of execution; and he took a delight, if they discovered anything of what he intended, immediately to change his orders to deceive them; and to that purpose, would often, when he had assigned his quarters in a place, pass forward and lengthen his day's march, especially if it was foul and rainy weather.[1]

The Swiss, in the beginning of his wars in Gaul, having sent to him to demand a free passage over the Roman territories, though resolved to hinder them by force, he nevertheless spoke kindly to the messengers, and took some respite to return an answer, to make use of that time for the calling his army together.[2] These silly people did not know how good a husband he was of his time: for he often repeats that it is the best part of a captain to know how to make use of occasions, and his diligence in his exploits is, in truth, unheard of and incredible.

If he was not very conscientious in taking advantage of an enemy under colour of a treaty of agreement, he was as little so in this, that he required no other virtue in a soldier but valour only, and seldom punished any other faults but mutiny and disobedience. He would often after his victories turn them loose to all sorts of licence, dispensing them for some time from the rules of military discipline, saying withal that he had soldiers so well trained up that, powdered and perfumed, they would run furiously to the fight.[3] In truth, he loved to have them richly armed, and made them wear engraved, gilded, and damasked armour, to the end that the care of saving it might engage them to a more obstinate defence.[4] Speaking to them, he called them by the name of fellow-soldiers,[5] which we yet use; which his successor, Augustus, reformed, supposing he had only done it upon necessity, and to cajole those who merely followed him as volunteers:

"Rheni mihi Cæsar in undis
Dux erat; hic socius; facinus quos inquinat, æquat:"[6]

[1] Suetonius, in vita, 65. [2] Cæsar, De Bell. Gall., i. 7.
[3] Suetonius, in vita, c. 67. [4] Idem, ibid. [5] Idem, ibid.
[6] "At the passage of the Rhine Cæsar was my general; here he

but that this carriage was too mean and low for the dignity of an emperor and general of an army, and therefore brought up the custom of calling them soldiers only.[1]

With this courtesy Cæsar mixed great severity to keep them in awe; the ninth legion having mutinied near Placentia, he ignominiously cashiered them, though Pompey was then yet on foot, and received them not again to grace till after many supplications; he quieted them more by authority and boldness than by gentle ways.[2]

In that place where he speaks of his passage over the Rhine to Germany, he says[3] that, thinking it unworthy of the honour of the Roman people to waft over his army in vessels, he built a bridge that they might pass over dry-foot. There it was that he built that wonderful bridge of which he gives so particular a description: for he nowhere so willingly dwells upon his actions as in representing to us the subtlety of his inventions in such kind of things.

I have also observed this, that he set a great value upon his exhortations to the soldiers before the fight; for where he would show that he was either surprised or reduced to a necessity of fighting, he always brings in this, that he had not so much as leisure to harangue his army. Before that great battle with those of Tournay, "Cæsar," says he,[4] "having given order for everything else, presently ran where fortune carried him to encourage his people, and meeting with the tenth legion had no more time to say anything to them but this, that they should remember their wonted valour; not be astonished, but bravely sustain the enemy's encounter, and seeing the enemy had already approached within a dart's cast, he gave the signal for battle; and going suddenly thence elsewhere, to encourage others, he found that they were already engaged." Here is what he tells us in that place. His tongue, indeed, did him notable service upon several occasions, and his military eloquence was, in his own time, so highly reputed, that many of his army wrote down his harangues as he

is, at Rome, my fellow. Crime renders all its accomplices equal."—LUCAN, v. 289.

[1] Suetonius, Life of Augustus, c. 25.
[2] Suetonius, in vita, c. 69.
[3] De Bello Gall., iv. 17.
[4] Idem, ibid., ii. 21.

spoke them, by which means there were volumes of them collected that existed a long time after him. He had so particular a grace in speaking, that they who were particularly acquainted with him, and Augustus amongst others, hearing those orations read, could distinguish even to the phrases and words that were not his.[1]

The first time that he went out of Rome with any public command, he arrived in eight days at the river Rhone, having with him in his coach a secretary or two before him who were continually writing, and him who carried his sword behind him.[2] And certainly, though a man did nothing but go on, he could hardly attain that promptitude with which, having been everywhere victorious in Gaul, he left it, and following Pompey to Brundusium in eighteen days' time he subdued all Italy; returned from Brundusium to Rome; from Rome went into the very heart of Spain, where he surmounted extreme difficulties in the war against Afranius and Petreius, and in the long siege of Marseilles; thence he returned into Macedonia, beat the Roman army at Pharsalia, passed thence in pursuit of Pompey into Egypt, which he also subdued; from Egypt he went into Syria and the territories of Pontus, where he fought Pharnaces; thence into Africa, where he defeated Scipio and Juba; again returned through Italy, where he defeated Pompey's sons:

> "Ocyor et cœli flammis, et tigride fœta."[3]

> "Ac veluti montis saxum de vertice præceps
> Cum ruit avulsum vento, seu turbidus imber
> Proluit, aut annis solvit sublapsa vetustas,
> Fertur in abruptum magno mons improbus actu,
> Exultatque solo, silvas, armenta, virosque,
> Involvens secum."[4]

Speaking of the siege of Avaricum, he says,[5] that it was

[1] Suetonius, in vita, c. 55.

[2] Plutarch, Life of Cæsar, c. 12.

[3] "Swifter than lightning, or the cub-bearing tigress."—LUCAN, v. 405.

[4] "As a stone torn from the mountain's top by the wind or rain torrents, or loosened by age, falls massive with mighty force, bounds here and there, in its course sweeps all before it, woods, herds, and men."—*Æneid*, xii. 684.

[5] De Bello Gall., vii. 24.

his custom to be night and day with the pioneers. In all enterprises of consequence he always reconnoitred in person, and never brought his army into quarters till he had first viewed the place, and, if we may believe Suetonius, when he resolved to pass over into England, he was the first man that sounded the passage.[1]

He was wont to say that he more valued a victory obtained by counsel than by force, and in the war against Petreius and Afranius, fortune presenting him with an occasion of manifest advantage, he declined it, saying,[2] that he hoped, with a little more time, but less hazard, to overthrow his enemies. He there also played a notable part in commanding his whole army to pass the river by swimming, without any manner of necessity:

> ... "Rapuitque ruens in prælia miles,
> Quod fugiens timuisset, iter; mox uda receptis
> Membra fovent armis, gelidosque à gurgite, cursu
> Restituunt artus."[3]

I find him a little more temperate and considerate in his enterprises than Alexander, for this man seems to seek and run headlong upon dangers like an impetuous torrent which attacks and rushes against everything it meets, without choice or discretion;

> "Sic tauriformis volvitur Aufidus,
> Qui regna Dauni perfluit Appuli,
> Dum sævit, horrendamque cultis
> Diluviem meditatur agris;"[4]

and, indeed, he was a general in the flower and first heat of his youth, whereas Cæsar took up the trade at a ripe and well advanced age; to which may be added that Alexander was of a more sanguine, hot, and choleric constitution, which he also inflamed with wine, from which Cæsar was very abstinent.

[1] In vita, c. 58. [2] De Bello Civ., i. 72.

[3] "The soldiers rush through a way to fight which they would have been afraid to have taken in flight. Then with their armour they cover wet limbs, and by running restore warmth to their numbed joints."—LUCAN, iv. 151.

[4] "So the biforked Aufidus, which waters the realm of the Apulian Daunus, when raging, threatens a fearful deluge to the tilled ground."—HORAT., *Od.* iv. 14, 25.

But where necessary occasion required, never did any man venture his person more than he: so much so, that for my part, methinks I read in many of his exploits a determinate resolution to throw himself away to avoid the shame of being overcome. In his great battle with those of Tournay, he charged up to the head of the enemies without his shield, just as he was seeing the van of his own army beginning to give ground;[1] which also several other times befell him. Hearing that his people were besieged, he passed through the enemy's army in disguise to go and encourage them with his presence.[2] Having crossed over to Dyrrachium with very slender forces, and seeing the remainder of his army which he had left to Antony's conduct slow in following him, he undertook alone to repass the sea in a very great storm,[3] and privately stole away to fetch the rest of his forces, the ports on the other side being seized by Pompey, and the whole sea being in his possession. And as to what he performed by force of hand, there are many exploits that in hazard exceed all the rules of war: for with how small means did he undertake to subdue the kingdom of Egypt, and afterwards to attack the forces of Scipio and Juba, ten times greater than his own? These people had, I know not what, more than human confidence in their fortune; and he was wont to say that men must embark, and not deliberate, upon high enterprises. After the battle of Pharsalia, when he had sent his army away before him into Asia, and was passing in one single vessel the strait of the Hellespont, he met Lucius Cassius at sea with ten tall men-of-war, when he had the courage not only to stay his coming, but to sail up to him and summon him to yield, which he did.[4]

Having undertaken that furious siege of Alexia, where there were fourscore thousand men in garrison, all Gaul being in arms to raise the siege and having set an army on foot of a hundred and nine thousand horse,[5] and of two hundred and forty thousand foot, what a boldness and vehement confidence was it in him that he would not give over his attempt, but resolved upon two so great diffi-

[1] De Bello Gall., ii. 25.
[2] Suetonius, in vita, c. 58.
[3] Idem, ibid., Lucan, v. 519.
[4] Idem, in vita, c. 62.
[5] Cæsar, De Bello Gall., vii. 64, says *eight thousand horse* only.

culties?—which nevertheless he overcame; and, after having won that great battle against those without, soon reduced those within to his mercy. The same happened to Lucullus at the siege of Tigranocerta against King Tigranes, but the condition of the enemy was not the same, considering the effeminacy of those with whom Lucullus had to deal. I will here set down two rare and extraordinary events concerning this siege of Alexia; one, that the Gauls having drawn their powers together to encounter Cæsar, after they had made a general muster of all their forces, resolved in their council of war to dismiss a good part of this great multitude, that they might not fall into confusion.[1] This example of fearing to be too many is new; but, to take it right, it stands to reason that the body of any army should be of a moderate greatness, and regulated to certain bounds, both out of respect to the difficulty of providing for them, and the difficulty of governing and keeping them in order. At least it is very easy to make it appear by example, that armies monstrous in number have seldom done anything to purpose. According to the saying of Cyrus in Xenophon, "'Tis not the number of men, but the number of good men, that gives the advantage:" the remainder serving rather to trouble than assist. And Bajazet principally grounded his resolution of giving Tamerlane battle, contrary to the opinion of all his captains, upon this, that his enemies' numberless number of men gave him assured hopes of confusion. Scanderbeg, a very good and expert judge in such matters, was wont to say that ten or twelve thousand reliable fighting men were sufficient to a good leader to secure his reputation in all sorts of military occasions. The other thing I will here record, which seems to be contrary both to the custom and rules of war, is, that Vercingetorix, who was made general of all the parts of the revolted Gaul, should go shut up himself in Alexia:[2] for he who has the command of a whole country ought never to shut himself up but in case of such last extremity that the only place he has left is in concern, and that the only hope he has left is in the defence of that city; otherwise he ought to keep himself always at

[1] Cæsar, De Bello Gall., vii. 71. [2] Idem, ibid., vii. 68.

liberty, that he may have the means to provide, in general, for all parts of his government.

To return to Cæsar. He grew, in time, more slow and more considerate, as his friend Oppius witnesses:[1] conceiving that he ought not lightly to hazard the glory of so many victories, which one blow of fortune might deprive him of. 'Tis what the Italians say, when they would reproach the rashness and foolhardiness of young people, calling them Bisognosi d'onore, "necessitous of honour," and that being in so great a want and dearth of reputation, they have reason to seek it at what price soever, which they ought not to do, who have acquired enough already. There may reasonably be some moderation, some satiety, in this thirst and appetite of glory, as well as in other things: and there are enough people who practise it.

He was far remote from the religious scruples of the ancient Romans, who would never prevail in their wars, but by dint of pure and simple valour; and yet he was more conscientious than we should be in these days, and did not approve all sorts of means to obtain a victory. In the war against Ariovistus, whilst he was parleying with him, there happened some commotion between the horsemen, which was occasioned by the fault of Ariovistus' light horse, wherein, though Cæsar saw he had a very great advantage of the enemy, he would make no use on't, lest he should have been reproached with a treacherous proceeding.[2]

He was always wont to wear rich garments and of a shining colour in battle, that he might be the more remarkable and better observed.

He always carried a stricter and tighter hand over his soldiers when near an enemy.[3] When the ancient Greeks would accuse any one of extreme insufficiency, they would say, in common proverb, that he could neither read nor swim; he was of the same opinion, that swimming was of great use in war, and himself found it so; for when he had to use diligence, he commonly swam over the rivers in his way; for he loved to march on foot, as also did Alexander

[1] Suetonius, Life of Cæsar, c. 60. [2] De Bello Gall., i. 46.
[3] Suetonius, in vita, c. 65.

the Great. Being in Egypt forced, to save himself, to go into a little boat, and so many people leaping in with him that it was in danger of sinking, he chose rather to commit himself to the sea, and swam to his fleet, which lay two hundred paces off, holding in his left hand his tablets, and drawing his coat-armour in his teeth, that it might not fall into the enemy's hand, and at this time he was of a pretty advanced age.[1]

Never had any general so much credit with his soldiers: in the beginning of the civil wars, his centurions offered him to find every one a man-at-arms at his own charge, and the foot soldiers to serve him at their own expense; those who were most at their ease, moreover, undertaking to defray the more necessitous.[2] The late Admiral Chastillon[3] showed us the like example in our civil wars; for the French of his army provided money out of their own purses to pay the foreigners that were with him. There are but rarely found examples of so ardent and so ready an affection amongst the soldiers of elder times, who kept themselves strictly to their rules of war: passion has a more absolute command over us than reason; and yet it happened in the war against Hannibal, that by the example of the people of Rome, in the city, the soldiers and captains refused their pay in the army, and in Marcellus' camp those were branded with the name of Mercenaries who would receive any. Having got the worst of it near Dyrrachium, his soldiers came and offered themselves to be chastised and punished, so that there was more need to comfort than reprove them.[4] One single cohort of his withstood four of Pompey's legions above four hours together, till they were almost all killed with arrows, so that there were a hundred and thirty thousand shafts found in the trenches.[5] A soldier called Scæva, who commanded at one of the avenues, invincibly maintained his ground, having lost an eye, with one shoulder and one thigh shot

[1] Suetonius, in vita, c. 64. [2] Idem, ibid., 68.

[3] Gaspard de Coligny, assassinated in the St. Bartholomew massacre, 24th August, 1572.

[4] Suetonius, Life of Cæsar, c. 68.

[5] Idem, ibid. Cæsar, De Bello Gall., iii. 53, makes the number thirty thousand only.

through, and his shield hit in two hundred and thirty places.[1] It happened that many of his soldiers being taken prisoners, rather chose to die than promise to join the contrary side.[2] Granius Petronius was taken by Scipio in Africa: Scipio having put the rest to death, sent him word that he gave him his life, for he was a man of quality and quæstor, to whom Petronius sent answer back, that Cæsar's soldiers were wont to give others their lives, and not to receive it; and immediately with his own hand killed himself.[3]

Of their fidelity there are infinite examples: amongst them, that which was done by those who were besieged in Salona, a city that stood for Cæsar against Pompey, is not, for the rarity of an accident that there happened, to be forgotten. Marcus Octavius kept them close besieged; they within being reduced to the extremest necessity of all things, so that to supply the want of men, most of them being either slain or wounded, they had manumitted all their slaves, and had been constrained to cut off all the women's hair to make ropes for their war engines, besides a wonderful dearth of victuals, and yet continuing resolute never to yield. After having drawn the siege to a great length, by which Octavius was grown more negligent and less attentive to his enterprise, they made choice of one day about noon, and having first placed the women and children upon the walls to make a show, sallied upon the besiegers with such fury, that having routed the first, second, and third body, and afterwards the fourth, and the rest, and beaten them all out of their trenches, they pursued them even to their ships, and Octavius himself was fain to fly to Dyrrachium where Pompey lay.[4] I do not at present remember that I have met with any other example where the besieged ever gave the besieger a total defeat, and won the field; nor that a sortie ever achieved the result of a pure and entire victory.

[1] Cæsar, De Bello Gall., iii. 53. Suetonius, Life of Cæsar, c. 68.
[2] Suetonius, ibid., 68. [3] Plutarch, Life of Cæsar, c. 5.
[4] Cæsar, De Bello Civ., iii. 9.

CHAPTER XXXV.

OF THREE GOOD WOMEN.

THEY are not by the dozen, as every one knows, and especially in the duties of marriage, for that is a bargain full of so many nice circumstances that 'tis hard a woman's will should long endure such a restraint; men, though their condition be something better under that tie, have yet enough to do. The true touch and test of a happy marriage have respect to the time of the companionship, if it has been constantly gentle, loyal, and agreeable. In our age, women commonly reserve the publication of their good offices, and their vehement affection towards their husbands until they have lost them, or at least, till then defer the testimonies of their good will: a too slow testimony, and unseasonable. By it they rather manifest that they never loved them till dead: their life is nothing but trouble; their death, full of love and courtesy. As fathers conceal their affection from their children, women, likewise, conceal theirs from their husbands, to maintain a modest respect. This mystery is not for my palate; 'tis to much purpose that they scratch themselves and tear their hair. I whisper in a waiting-woman's or secretary's ear: "How were they, how did they live, together?" I always have that good saying in my head: "Jactantius mœrent, quæ minus dolent."[1] Their whimpering is offensive to the living, and vain to the dead. We should willingly give them leave to laugh after we are dead, provided they will smile upon us whilst we are alive. Is it not enough to make a man revive in pure spite, that she, who spat in my face whilst I was in being, shall come to kiss my feet when I am no more? If there be any honour in lamenting a husband, it only appertains to those who smiled upon them whilst they had them; let those who wept during their lives laugh at their deaths, as well outwardly as within. Therefore, never

[1] "They make the most ado who are least concerned."—TACITUS, *Annal.*, ii. 77, writing of Germanicus.

regard those blubbered eyes and that pitiful voice; consider her deportment, her complexion, the plumpness of her cheeks under all those formal veils; 'tis there she talks plain French. There are few who do not mend upon't, and health is a quality that cannot lie. That starched and ceremonious countenance looks not so much back as forward, and is rather intended to get a new husband than to lament the old. When I was a boy, a very beautiful and virtuous lady, who is yet living, the widow of a prince, wore somewhat more ornament in her dress than our laws of widowhood allow, and being reproached with it, she made answer, that it was because she was resolved to have no more love affairs, and would never marry again.

I have here, not at all dissenting from our customs, made choice of three women, who have also expressed the utmost of their goodness and affection about their husbands' deaths; yet are they examples of another kind than are now in use, and so austere that they will hardly be drawn into imitation.

The younger Pliny[1] had near a house of his in Italy a neighbour who was exceedingly tormented with certain ulcers in his private parts. His wife seeing him so long to languish, entreated that he would give her leave to see and at leisure to consider of the condition of his disease, and that she would freely tell him what she thought. This permission being obtained, and she having curiously examined the business, found it impossible he could ever be cured, and that all he had to hope for or expect, was a great while to linger out a painful and miserable life, and, therefore, as the most sure and sovereign remedy, resolutely advised him to kill himself. But finding him a little tender and backward in so rude an attempt: "Do not think, my friend," said she, "that the torments I see thee endure are not as sensible to me as to thyself, and that to deliver myself from them, I will not myself make use of the same remedy I have prescribed to thee. I will accompany thee in the cure as I have done in the disease; fear nothing, but believe that we shall have pleasure in this passage that is to free us from so many miseries, and we will go happily

[1] Ep. vi. 24.

together." Which having said, and roused up her husband's courage, she resolved that they should throw themselves headlong into the sea out of a window that overlooked it, and that she might maintain to the last the loyal and vehement affection wherewith she had embraced him during his life, she would also have him die in her arms; but lest they should fail, and should quit their hold in the fall through fear, she tied herself fast to him by the waist, and so gave up her own life to procure her husband's repose. This was a woman of mean condition; and, amongst that class of people, 'tis no very new thing to see some examples of rare virtue:

"Extrema per illos
Justitia excedens terris vestigia fecit."[1]

The other two were noble and rich, where examples of virtue are rarely lodged.

Arria, the wife of Cecina Pætus;[2] a consular person, was the mother of another Arria, the wife of Thrasea Pætus, he whose virtue was so renowned in the time of Nero, and by this son-in-law, the grandmother of Fannia: for the resemblance of the names of these men and women, and their fortunes, have led to several mistakes. This first Arria, her husband Cecina Pætus, having been taken prisoner by some of the Emperor Claudius' people, after Scribonianus' defeat, whose party he had embraced in the war, begged of those who were to carry him prisoner to Rome, that they would take her into their ship, where she should be of much less charge and trouble to them than a great many persons they must otherwise have to attend her husband, and that she alone would undertake to serve him in his chamber, his kitchen, and all other offices. They refused; whereupon she put herself into a fisher boat she hired on the spot, and in that manner followed him from Sclavonia. When she had come to Rome, Junia, the widow of Scribonianus, having one day, from the resemblance of their fortune, accosted her in the Emperor's presence; she rudely repulsed her with these words, "I," said she, "speak to thee, or give ear to any thing thou sayest! to thee in whose lap Scribo-

[1] "Justice when she left the earth, took her last steps among them."—VIRGIL, *Georg.*, ii 473.

[2] Pliny, Ep. iii. 16.

nianus was slain, and thou art yet alive!" These words, with several other signs, gave her friends to understand that she would undoubtedly despatch herself, impatient of supporting her husband's misfortune. And Thrasea, her son-in-law, beseeching her not to throw away herself, and saying to her, "What! if I should run the same fortune that Cæcina has done, would you that your daughter, my wife, should do the same?" "Would I?" replied she, "yes, yes, I would: if she had lived as long, and in as good understanding with thee, as I have done with my husband." These answers made them more careful of her, and to have a more watchful eye to her proceedings. One day, having said to those who looked to her; "'Tis to much purpose that you take all this pains to prevent me; you may indeed make me die an ill death, but to keep me from dying is not in your power;" she in a sudden phrensy started from a chair whereon she sat, and with all her force dashed her head against the wall, by which blow being laid flat in a swoon, and very much wounded, after they had again with great ado brought her to herself: "I told you," said she, "that if you refused me some easy way of dying, I should find out another, how painful soever." The conclusion of so admirable a virtue was this: her husband Pætus, not having resolution enough of his own to despatch himself, as he was by the emperor's cruelty enjoined, one day, amongst others, after having first employed all the reasons and exhortations which she thought most prevalent to persuade him to it, she snatched the poignard he wore from his side, and holding it ready in her hand, for the conclusion of her admonitions: "Do thus, Pætus," said she, and in the same instant giving herself a mortal stab in the breast, and then drawing it out of the wound, presented it to him, ending her life with this noble, generous, and immortal saying, "Pæte, non dolet"—having time to pronounce no more but those three never-to-be-forgotten words: "Pætus, it is not painful:"

"Casta suo gladium cum traderet Arria Pæto,
Quem de visceribus traxerat ipsa suis:
Si qua fides, vulnus quod feci non dolet, inquit,
Sed quod tu facies, id mihi, Pæte, dolet."[1]

[1] "When the chaste Arria gave to Pætus the reeking sword she

The action was much more noble in itself, and of a braver sense than the poet expressed it; for she was so far from being deterred by the thought of her husband's wound and death and her own, that she had been their promotress and adviser: but having performed this high and courageous enterprise for her husband's only convenience, she had even in the last gasp of her life no other concern but for him, and of dispossessing him of the fear of dying with her. Pætus presently struck himself to the heart with the same weapon, ashamed, I suppose, to have stood in need of so dear and precious an example.[1]

Pompeia Paulina, a young and very noble Roman lady, had married Seneca in his extreme old age. Nero, his fine pupil, sent his guards to him to denounce the sentence of death, which was performed after this manner: When the Roman emperors of those times had condemned any man of quality, they sent to him by their officers to choose what death he would, and to execute it within such or such a time, which was limited according to the degree of their indignation, to a shorter or a longer respite, that they might therein have better leisure to dispose their affairs, and sometimes depriving them of the means of doing it by the shortness of the time; and if the condemned seemed unwilling to submit to the order, they had people ready at hand to execute it either by cutting the veins of the arms and legs, or by compelling them by force to swallow a draught of poison. But persons of honour would not abide this necessity, but made use of their own physicians and surgeons for this purpose. Seneca, with a calm and steady countenance, heard their charge, and presently called for paper to write his will, which being by the captain refused, he turned himself towards his friends, saying to them, "Since I cannot leave you any other acknowledgment of the obligation I have to you, I leave you at least the best thing I have, namely, the image of my life and manners, which I entreat you to keep in memory of me, that by so doing you may acquire the glory of sincere and real friends."

had drawn from her breast, 'Believe me,' she said, 'Pætus, the wound I have made hurts not, but 'tis the wound thou wilt make that hurts me."—MARTIAL, i. 14.

[1] Tacitus, Annal., xv. 61-64.

And therewithal, one while appeasing the sorrow he saw in them with gentle words, and presently raising his voice to reprove them; "What," said he, "are become of all our brave philosophical precepts? What are become of all the provisions we have so many years laid up against the accidents of fortune? Is Nero's cruelty unknown to us? What could we expect from him who had murdered his mother and his brother, but that he should put his tutor to death who had brought him up?" After having spoken these words in general, he turned himself towards his wife, and embracing her fast in his arms, as, her heart and strength failing her, she was ready to sink down with grief, he begged of her, for his sake, to bear this accident with a little more patience, telling her, that now the hour was come wherein he was to show, not by argument and discourse, but effect, the fruit he had acquired by his studies, and that he really embraced his death, not only without grief, but moreover with joy. "Wherefore, my dearest," said he, "do not dishonour it with thy tears, that it may not seem as if thou lovest thyself more than my reputation. Moderate thy grief, and comfort thyself in the knowledge thou hast had of me and my actions, leading the remainder of thy life in the same virtuous manner thou hast hitherto done." To which Paulina, having a little recovered her spirits, and warmed the magnanimity of her courage with a most generous affection, replied, "No, Seneca," said she, "I am not a woman to suffer you to go alone in such a necessity: I will not have you think that the virtuous examples of your life have not taught me how to die; and when can I ever better or more fittingly do it, or more to my own desire, than with you? and therefore assure yourself I will go along with you." Then Seneca, taking this noble and generous resolution of his wife in good part, and also willing to free himself from the fear of leaving her exposed to the cruelty of his enemies after his death: "I have, Paulina," said he, "instructed thee in what would serve thee happily to live; but thou more covetest, I see, the honour of dying: in truth, I will not grudge it thee; the constancy and resolution in our common end are the same, but the beauty and glory of thy part are much greater." Which being said, the surgeons, at the same

time, opened the veins of both their arms, but as those of Seneca were more shrunk up, as well with age as abstinence, made his blood flow too slowly, he moreover commanded them to open the veins of his thighs; and lest the torments he endured might pierce his wife's heart, and also to free himself from the affliction of seeing her in so sad a condition, after having taken a very affectionate leave of her, he entreated she would suffer them to carry her into her chamber, which they accordingly did. But all these incisions being not yet enough to make him die, he commanded Statius Anneus, his physician, to give him a draught of poison, which had not much better effect; for by reason of the weakness and coldness of his limbs, it could not arrive at his heart. Wherefore they were forced to superadd a very hot bath, and then, feeling his end approach, whilst he had breath he continued excellent discourses upon the subject of his present condition, which the secretaries wrote down so long as they could hear his voice, and his last words were long after in high honour and esteem amongst men, and it is a great loss to us that they have not come down to our times. Then, feeling the last pangs of death, with the bloody water of the bath he bathed his head, saying, "This water I dedicate to Jupiter the deliverer." Nero, being presently informed of all this, fearing lest the death of Paulina, who was one of the best-born ladies of Rome, and against whom he had no particular unkindness, should turn to his reproach, sent orders in all haste to bind up her wounds, which her attendants did without her knowledge, she being already half dead, and without all manner of sense. Thus, though she lived contrary to her own design, it was very honourably, and befitting her own virtue, her pale complexion ever after manifesting how much life had run from her veins.

These are my three very true stories, which I find as entertaining and as tragic as any of those we make out of our own heads wherewith to amuse the common people; and I wonder that they who are addicted to such relations, do not rather cull out ten thousand very fine stories, which are to be found in books that would save them the trouble of invention, and be more useful and diverting; and he who would make a whole and connected body of them, would

need to add nothing of his own, but the connection only, as it were the solder of another metal; and might by this means embody a great many true events of all sorts, disposing and diversifying them according as the beauty of the work should require, after the same manner almost, as Ovid has made up his Metamorphoses[1] of the infinite number of various fables.

In the last couple, this is, moreover, worthy of consideration, that Paulina voluntarily offered to lose her life for the love of her husband, and that her husband had formerly also forborne to die for the love of her. We may think there is no just counterpoise in this exchange; but, according to his stoical humour, I fancy he thought he had done as much for her, in prolonging his life upon her account, as if he had died for her. In one of his letters to Lucilius, after he has given him to understand that, being seized with an ague in Rome, he presently took coach to go to a house he had in the country, contrary to his wife's opinion, who would have him stay, and that he had told her that the ague he was seized with was not a fever of the body but of the place, it follows thus: "She let me go," says he, "giving me a strict charge of my health. Now I, who know that her life is involved in mine, begin to make much of myself, that I may preserve her. And I lose the privilege my age has given me, of being more constant and resolute in many things, when I call to mind that in this old fellow there is a young girl who is interested in his health. And since I cannot persuade her to love me more courageously, she makes me more solicitously love myself: for we must allow something to honest affections, and, sometimes, though occasions importune us to the contrary, we must call back life, even though it be with torment: we must hold the soul fast in our teeth, since the rule of living, amongst good men, is not so long as they please, but as long as they ought. He that loves not his wife or his friend so well as to prolong his life for them, but will obstinately die, is too delicate and too effeminate: the soul must impose this upon itself, when the utility of our friends so requires; we must sometimes lend ourselves to

[1] The edition of 1588 has, "as Ariosto has ranged in a series that vast number of divers fables."

our friends, and when we would die for ourselves must break that resolution for them. 'Tis a testimony of grandeur of courage to return to life for the consideration of another, as many excellent persons have done: and 'tis a mark of singular good nature to preserve old age (of which the greatest convenience is the indifference as to its duration, and a more stout and disdainful use of life), when a man perceives that this office is pleasing, agreeable, and useful to some person by whom he is very much beloved. And a man reaps by it a very pleasing reward; for what can be more delightful than to be so dear to his wife, as upon her account he shall become dearer to himself? Thus has my Paulina loaded me not only with her fears, but my own; it has not been sufficient to consider how resolutely I could die, but I have also considered how irresolutely she would bear my death. I am enforced to live, and sometimes to live is magnanimity." These are his own words, as excellent as they everywhere are.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

OF THE MOST EXCELLENT MEN.

If I should be asked my choice among all the men who have come to my knowledge, I should make answer, that methinks I find three more excellent than all the rest.

One of them Homer: not that Aristotle and Varro, for example, were not, peradventure, as learned as he; nor that possibly Virgil was not equal to him in his own art, which I leave to be determined by such as know them both. I who, for my part, understand but one of them, can only say this, according to my poor talent, that I do not believe the Muses themselves could ever go beyond the Roman:

> "Tale facit carmen docta testudine, quale
> Cynthius impositis temperat articulis:"[1]

[1] "He sings to his learned lute verses such as Apollo would sing."—PROPERTIUS, ii. 34, 79.

and yet in this judgment we are not to forget that it is chiefly from Homer that Virgil derives his excellence; that he is his guide and teacher; and that one touch of the Iliad has supplied him with body and matter out of which to compose his great and divine Æneid. I do not reckon upon that, but mix several other circumstances that render to me this poet admirable, even as it were above human condition. And, in truth, I often wonder that he who has produced, and, by his authority, given reputation in the world to so many deities, was not deified himself. Being blind and poor, living before the sciences were reduced into rule and certain observation, he was so well acquainted with them, that all those who have since taken upon them to establish governments, to carry on wars, and to write either of religion or philosophy, of what sect soever, or of the arts, have made use of him as of a most perfect instructor in the knowledge of all things, and of his books as of a treasury of all sorts of learning:

> "Qui, quid sit pulcrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
> Plenius ac melius Chrysippo et Crantore dixit:"[1]

and as this other says,

> "A quo, ceu fonte perenni,
> Vatum Pieriis ora rigantur aquis;"

and the other,

> "Adde Heliconiadum comites, quorum unus Homerus.
> Sceptra potitus;"[3]

and the other,

> "Cujusque ex ore profuso
> Omnis posteritas latices in carmina duxit,
> Amnemque in tenues ausa est deducere rivos.
> Unius fœcunda bonis."[4]

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[1] "Who tells us what is good, what evil: what useful, what not useful, fuller and better than Chrysippus or Crantor?"—HORACE, *Ep.* i. 2, 3.

[2] "From whose never-failing spring the poet drinks in Pierian waters."—OVID, *Amor.*, iii. 9, 25.

[3] "Add the companions of the Muses, among whom Homer alone holds the sceptre."—LUCRETIUS, iii. 1050,

[4] "From whose full-flowing stream all later poets have drawn out verses, and have made bold to turn the mighty stream into their little rivulets, all rich in the inheritance of one man."—MANILIUS, *Astron.*, ii. 8.

'Tis contrary to the order of nature that he has made the most excellent production that can possibly be; for the ordinary birth of things is imperfect; they thrive and gather strength by growing, whereas he rendered the infancy of poesy and several other sciences mature, perfect, and accomplished at first. And for this reason he may be called the first and the last of the poets, according to the fine testimony antiquity has left us of him, "that as there was none before him whom he could imitate, so there has been none since that could imitate him."[1] His words, according to Aristotle,[2] are the only words that have motion and action, the only substantial words. Alexander the Great, having found a rich cabinet amongst Darius' spoils, gave order it should be reserved for him to keep his Homer in,[3] saying: that he was the best and most faithful counsellor he had in his military affairs.[4] For the same reason it was that Cleomenes, the son of Anaxandridas, said that he was the poet of the Lacedæmonians, for that he was an excellent master for the discipline of war.[5] This singular and particular commendation is also left of him in the judgment of Plutarch,[6] that he is the only author in the world that never glutted nor disgusted his readers, presenting himself always another thing, and always flourishing in some new grace. That wanton Alcibiades, having asked one, who pretended to learning, for a book of Homer, gave him a box of the ear because he had none,[7] which he thought as scandalous, as we should, if we found one of our priests without a Breviary. Xenophanes complained one day to Hiero, the tyrant of Syracuse, that he was so poor he had not wherewithal to maintain two servants. "What!" replied he, "Homer who was much poorer than thou art, keeps above ten thousand, though he is dead."[8] What did Panætius leave unsaid when he called Plato the Homer of the philosophers?[9]

[1] Velleius Paterculus, i. 5.
[2] Poetics, c. 24.
[3] Pliny, Nat. Hist., vii. 29.
[4] Plutarch, Life of Alexander, c. 2.
[5] Idem, Apothegms of the Lacedæmonians.
[6] In his Treatise on Loquacity, c. 5, 8.
[7] Plutarch, Life of Alcibiades, c. 3.
[8] Plutarch, Apothegms of the kings, Hiero.
[9] Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., i. 32.

Besides, what glory can be compared to his? Nothing is so frequent in men's mouths as his name and works, nothing so known and received as Troy, Helen, and the war about her, when perhaps there was never any such thing. Our children are still called by names that he invented above three thousand years ago; who does not know Hector and Achilles? Not only some particular families, but most nations also seek their origin in his inventions. Mohammed, the second of that name, emperor of the Turks, writing to our Pope Pius II., "I am astonished," says he, "that the Italians should appear against me, considering that we have our common descent from the Trojans, and that it concerns me as well as it does them to revenge the blood of Hector upon the Greeks, whom they countenance against me."[1] Is it not a noble farce wherein kings, republics, and emperors have so many ages played their parts, and to which the vast universe serves for a theatre? Seven Grecian cities contended for his birth, so much honour even his obscurity helped him to!

"Smyrna, Rhodos, Colophon, Salamis, Chios, Argos, Athenæ."[2]

The other[3] is Alexander the Great. For whoever will consider the age at which he began his enterprises, the small means by which he effected so glorious a design, the authority he obtained in such mere youth with the greatest and most experienced captains of the world, by whom he was followed, the extraordinary favour wherewith fortune embraced and favoured so many hazardous, not to say rash, exploits,

"Impellens quicquid sibi summa petenti
Obstaret, gaudensque viam fecisse ruina;"[4]

that grandeur, to have at the age of three and thirty years passed victorious through the whole habitable earth, and in half a life to have attained to the utmost of what human nature can do; so that you cannot imagine its just duration

[1] The letter is, however, altogether problematical.
[2] Aulus Gellius, iii. 11.
[3] That is, Montaigne's second great man.
[4] "Bearing down all who sought to withstand him, and pleased to force his way though by ruin."—LUCAN, i. 149.

and the continuation of his increase in valour and fortune, up to a due maturity of age, but that you must withal imagine something more than man: to have made so many royal branches to spring from his soldiers, leaving the world, at his death, divided amongst four successors, simple captains of his army, whose posterity so long continued and maintained that vast possession; so many excellent virtues as he was master of,—justice, temperance, liberality, truth in his word, love towards his own people, and humanity towards those he overcame; for his manners, in general, seem, in truth, incapable of any manner of reproach, although some particular and extraordinary actions of his may fall under censure. But it is impossible to carry on such great things as he did within the strict rules of justice; such as he are to be judged in gross, by the main end of their actions. The ruin of Thebes and Persepolis, the murder of Menander, and of Ephestion's physician, the massacre of so many Persian prisoners at one time, of a troop of Indian soldiers, not without prejudice to his word, and of the Cosseians, so much as to the very children, are indeed sallies that are not well to be excused.[1] For, as to Clitus, the fault was more than mended in his repentance, and that very action, as much as any other whatever, manifests the sweetness of his nature, a nature most excellently formed to goodness; and it was ingeniously said of him, that he had his virtues by nature, and his vices by fortune.[2] As to his being a little given to bragging, a little too impatient of hearing himself ill spoken of, and as to those mangers, arms, and bits he caused to be strewed in the Indies,[3] all those little vanities, methinks, may very well be allowed to his youth, and the prodigious prosperity of his fortune. And who will consider withal his so many military virtues, his diligence, foresight, patience, discipline, subtlety, magnanimity, resolution, and good fortune, wherein (though we had not had the authority of Hannibal to assure us) he was the first of men, the admirable beauty and symmetry of his person, even to a miracle,

[1] Plutarch, Life of Alexander, c. 18 and 22; Quintus Curtius, x. 4, 5.

[2] Quintus Curtius, x. 5.

[3] Plutarch, in vita, c. 19; Diodorus Siculus, xvii. 95, &c.

his majestic port and awful mien, in a face so young, ruddy, and radiant;

> "Qualis, ubi Oceani perfusus Lucifer unda,
> Quem Venus ante alios astrorum diligit ignes,
> Extulit os sacrum cœlo, tenebrasque resolvit;"[1]

the excellence of his knowledge and capacity; the duration and grandeur of his glory, pure, clean, without spot or envy, and that long after his death it was a religious belief that his very medals brought good fortune to all who carried them about them;[2] and that more kings and princes have written his actions than other historians have written the actions of any other king or prince whatever; and that to this very day the Mohammedans, who despise all other histories, admit of and honour his alone, by a special privilege: whoever, I say, will seriously consider these particulars, will confess that all these things put together, I had reason to prefer him before Cæsar himself, who alone could make me doubtful in my choice: and it cannot be denied that there was more of his own in his exploits, and more of fortune in those of Alexander. They were in many things equal, and peradventure, Cæsar had some greater qualities: they were two fires, or two torrents, overrunning the world by several ways;

> "Et velut immissi diversis partibus ignes
> Arentem in silvam, et virgulta sonantia lauro:
> Aut ubi decursu rapido de montibus altis
> Dant sonitum spumosi amnes, et in æquora currunt,
> Quisque suum populatus iter:"[3]

but though Cæsar's ambition had been more moderate, it would still be so unhappy, having the ruin of his country and universal mischief to the world for its abominable

[1] "As when, bathed in the waves of ocean, Lucifer, whom Venus loves beyond the other stars, has displayed his venerable aspect in the heavens, and dispersed the darkness."—*Æneid*, iii. 589.

[2] Trebellius Pollio, Trigenta Tyrann., c. 14.

[3] "And as fires applied in several parts to a dry grove of crackling laurels; or as with impetuous fall from the steep mountains, torrents pour down to the ocean, each bearing all down before them."—*Æneid*, xii. 521.

object, that, all things raked together and put into the balance, I must needs incline to Alexander's side.

The third, and, in my opinion, the most excellent, is Epaminondas. Of glory he has not near so much as the other two (which, for that matter, is but a part of the substance of the thing): of valour and resolution, not of that sort which is pushed on by ambition, but of that which wisdom and reason can plant in a regular soul, he had all that could be imagined. Of this virtue of his, he has, in my idea, given as ample proof as Alexander himself or Cæsar: for although his warlike exploits were neither so frequent nor so full, they were yet, if duly considered in all their circumstances, as important, as bravely fought, and carried with them as manifest testimony of valour and military conduct, as those of any whatever. The Greeks have done him the honour, without contradiction, to pronounce him the greatest man of their nation;[1] and to be the first of Greece, is easily to be the first in the world. As to his knowledge, we have this ancient judgment of him, "That never any man knew so much, and spake so little as he;"[2] for he was of the Pythagorean sect; but when he did speak, never any man spake better; an excellent orator, and of powerful persuasion. But as to his manners and conscience, he infinitely surpassed all men who ever undertook the management of affairs; for in this one thing, which ought chiefly to be considered, which alone truly denotes us for what we are, and which alone I make counterbalance all the rest put together, he comes not short of any philosopher whatever, not even of Socrates himself. Innocence, in this man, is a quality peculiar, sovereign, constant, uniform, incorruptible, compared with which, it appears in Alexander subject to something else subaltern, uncertain, variable, effeminate, and fortuitous.

Antiquity has judged that in thoroughly sifting all the other great captains, there is found in every one some peculiar quality that illustrates his name: in this man only, there is a full and equal virtue throughout, that leaves nothing to be wished for in him, whether in private or

[1] Diodorus Siculus, xv. 88; Pausanias, viii 11, etc.
[2] Plutarch, On the Dæmon of Socrates, c. 23.

public employment, whether in peace or war; whether to live gloriously and grandly, and to die: I do not know any form or fortune of man that I so much honour and love.

'Tis true that I look upon his obstinate poverty, as it is set out by his best friends, as a little too scrupulous and nice; and this is the only feature, though high in itself and well worthy of admiration, that I find so rugged as not to desire to imitate, to the degree it was in him.

Scipio Æmilianus alone, could one attribute to him as brave and magnificent an end, and as profound and universal a knowledge, might be put into the other scale of the balance. O, what an injury has time done me, to deprive me of the sight of two of the most noble lives which, by the common consent of all the world, one of the greatest of the Greeks, and the other of the Romans, were in all Plutarch. What a matter! what a workman!

For a man that was no saint, but, as we say a gentleman, of civilian and ordinary manners, and of a moderate ambition, the richest life that I know, and full of the richest and most to be desired parts, all things considered, is, in my opinion, that of Alcibiades.

But as to what concerns Epaminondas, I will here, for the example of an excessive goodness, add some of his opinions: he declared, that the greatest satisfaction he ever had in his whole life, was the contentment he gave his father and mother by his victory at Leuctra;[1] wherein his deference is great, preferring their pleasure before his own, so just and so full of so glorious an action. He did not think it lawful, even to restore the liberty of his country, to kill a man without knowing a cause:[2] which made him so cold in the enterprise of his companion Pelopidas for the relief of Thebes. He was also of opinion, that men in battle ought to avoid the encounter of a friend who was on the contrary side, and to spare him.[3] And his humanity, even towards his enemies themselves, having rendered him suspected to the Bœotians, for that, after he had miraculously forced the Lacedæmonians to open to him the pass which they had undertaken to defend at the entry into the Morea, near Corinth, he contented himself with

[1] Plutarch, Life of Coriolanus, c. 2.
[2] Idem, On the Dæmon of Socrates, c. 4. [3] Idem, ibid., c. 17.

having charged through them, without pursuing them to the utmost, he had his commission of general taken from him, very honourably upon such an account, and for the shame it was to them upon necessity afterwards to restore him to his command, and so to manifest how much upon him depended their safety and honour; victory like a shadow attending him wherever he went; and indeed the prosperity of his country, as being from him derived, died with him.[1]

CHAPTER XXXVII.

OF THE RESEMBLANCE OF CHILDREN TO THEIR FATHERS.

THIS faggoting up of so many divers pieces is so done that I never set pen to paper, but when I have too much idle time, and never anywhere but at home; so that it is compiled after divers interruptions and intervals, occasions keeping me sometimes many months elsewhere. As to the rest, I never correct my first by any second conceptions; I, peradventure, may alter a word or so: but 'tis only to vary the phrase, and not to destroy my former meaning. I have a mind to represent the progress of my humours, and that every one may see each piece as it came from the forge. I could wish I had begun sooner, and had taken more notice of the course of my mutations. A servant of mine whom I employed to transcribe for me, thought he had got a prize by stealing several pieces from me, wherewith he was best pleased; but it is my comfort that he will be no greater a gainer than I shall be a loser by the theft. I am grown older by seven or eight years since I began; nor has it been without some new acquisition: I have, in that time, by the liberality of years, been acquainted with the stone: their commerce and long converse do not well pass away without some such inconvenience. I could have been glad that of other infirmities age has to present long-lived men withal, it had chosen some one that would have

[1] Diodorus Siculus, xv. 88; Corn. Nepos, in vita, c. 10.

been more welcome to me, for it could not possibly have laid upon me a disease, for which, even from my infancy, I have had so great a horror; and it is, in truth, of all the accidents of old age, that of which I have ever been most afraid. I have often thought with myself, that I went on too far, and that in so long a voyage I should at last run myself into some disadvantage; I perceived and have often enough declared, that it was time to depart, and that life should be cut off in the sound and living part, according to the surgeon's rule in amputations; and that nature made him pay very strict usury, who did not in due time pay the principal. And yet I was so far from being ready, that in the eighteen months time or thereabout, that I have been in this uneasy condition, I have so inured myself to it as to be content to live on in it; and have found wherein to comfort myself, and to hope: so much are men enslaved to their miserable being, that there is no condition so wretched they will not accept, provided they may live! Hear Mæcenas,

> "Debilem facito manu,
> Debilem pede, coxa,
> Lubricos quate dentes;
> Vita dum superest, bene est."[1]

And Tamerlane, with a foolish humanity, palliated the fantastic cruelty he exercised upon lepers, when he put all he could hear of to death, to deliver them, as he pretended, from the painful life they lived. For there was not one of them who would not rather have undergone a triple leprosy than be deprived of his being. And Antisthenes the Stoic,[2] being very sick, and crying out, "Who will deliver me from these evils?" Diogenes, who had come to visit him, "This," said he, presenting him a knife, "presently, if thou wilt." "I do not mean from my life," he replied, "but from my disease." The sufferings that only attack the mind, I am not so sensible of as most other men; and this partly out of judgment, for the world looks upon several things as dreadful or to be avoided at the expense of life, that are almost indifferent to me: partly, through a dull and

[1] "Maim both hands and feet, legs and thighs; knock out my teeth: while there's life, 'tis well."—*Apud* SENECA, *Ep.* 101.

[2] Or rather the Cynic. See Diogenes Laertius, vi. 18.

insensible complexion I have in accidents which do not point blank hit me; and that insensibility I look upon as one of the best parts of my natural condition: but essential and corporeal pains I am very sensible of. And yet, having long since foreseen them, though with a sight weak and delicate and softened with the long and happy health and quiet that God has been pleased to give me the greatest part of my time, I had in my imagination fancied them so insupportable, that, in truth, I was more afraid than I have since found I had cause: by which I am still more fortified in this belief, that most of the faculties of the soul, as we employ them, more trouble the repose of life than they are any way useful to it.

I am in conflict with the worst, the most sudden, the most painful, the most mortal, and the most irremediable of all diseases; I have already had the trial of five or six very long and very painful fits; and yet I either flatter myself, or there is even in this state what is very well to be endured by a man who has his soul free from the fear of death, and of the menaces, conclusions, and consequences which physic is ever thundering in our ears; but the effect even of pain itself is not so sharp and intolerable as to put a man of understanding into rage and despair. I have at least this advantage by my stone, that what I could not hitherto prevail upon myself to resolve upon, as to reconciling and acquainting myself with death, it will perfect; for the more it presses upon and importunes me, I shall be so much the less afraid to die. I had already gone so far as only to love life for life's sake, but my pain will dissolve this intelligence; and, God grant that in the end, should the sharpness of it be once greater than I shall be able to bear, it does not throw me into the other no less vicious extreme, to desire and wish to die!

"Summum nec metuas diem, nec optes:"[1]

they are two passions to be feared, but the one has its remedy much nearer at hand than the other.

As to the rest, I have always found the precept, that so rigorously enjoins a resolute countenance and disdainful

1 "Neither to wish, nor fear, to die."—MARTIAL, x. 47.

and indifferent comportment in the toleration of infirmities, to be merely ceremonial. Why should philosophy, which only has respect to life and effects, trouble itself about these external appearances? Let us leave that care to actors and masters of rhetoric, who set so great a value upon our gestures. Let her allow this vocal frailty to disease, if it be neither cordial nor stomachic, and permit the ordinary ways of expressing grief by sighs, sobs, palpitations, and turning pale, that nature has put out of our power; provided the courage be undaunted, and the tones not expressive of despair, let her be satisfied. What matter the wringing of our hands, if we do not wring our thoughts? She forms us for ourselves, not for others; to be, not to seem: let her be satisfied with governing our understanding which she has taken upon her the care of instructing; that, in the fury of the colic, she maintain the soul in a condition to know itself, and to follow its accustomed way, contending with, and enduring not meanly truckling, under pain; moved and heated, not subdued and conquered, in the contention; capable of discourse and other things, to a certain degree. In such extreme accidents, 'tis cruelty to require so exact a composedness. 'Tis no great matter that we make a wry face, if the mind plays its part well: if the body find itself relieved by complaining, let it complain: if agitation ease it, let it tumble and toss at pleasure; if it seem to find the disease evaporate (as some physicians hold that it helps women in delivery) in making loud outcries, or if this do but divert its torments, let it roar as it will. Let us not command this voice to sally, but stop it not. Epicurus[1] not only forgives his sage for crying out in torments, but advises him to it: "Pugiles etiam, quum feriunt, in jactandis cæstibus ingemiscunt, quia profundenda voce omne corpus intenditur, venitque plaga vehementior."[2] We have enough to do to deal with the disease, without troubling ourselves with these superfluous rules.

[1] Diogenes Laertius, x. 118.

[2] "When men fight with the cœstus, they groan in striking, because the whole strength of body goes along with the voice, and the blow is laid on with greater force."—CICERO, *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 23.

Which I say in excuse of those whom we ordinarily see impatient in the assaults of this malady; for as to what concerns myself, I have passed it over hitherto with a little better countenance, and contented myself with groaning without roaring out; not, nevertheless, that I put any great constraint upon myself to maintain this exterior decorum, for I make little account of such an advantage: I allow herein as much as the pain requires; but either my pains are not so excessive, or I have more than ordinary patience. I complain, I confess, and am a little impatient in a very sharp fit, but I do not arrive to such a degree of despair as he who with

> "Ejulatu, questu, gemitu, fremitibus
> Resonando, multum flebiles voces refert:"[1]

I try myself in the depth of my dolor, and have always found that I was in a capacity to speak, think, and give a rational answer as well as at any other time, but not so firmly, being troubled and interrupted by the pain. When I am looked upon by my visitors to be in the greatest torment, and that they therefore forbear to trouble me, I often essay my own strength, and myself set some discourse on foot, the most remote I can contrive from my present condition. I can do anything upon a sudden endeavour, but it must not continue long. Oh, what pity 'tis I have not the faculty of that dreamer in Cicero,[2] who dreaming he was lying with a wench, found he had discharged his stone in the sheets! My pains strangely disappetite me that way. In the intervals from this excessive torment, when my ureters only languish without any great dolor, I presently feel myself in my wonted state, forasmuch as my soul takes no other alarm but what is sensible and corporal, which I certainly owe to the care I have had of preparing myself by meditation against such accidents:

> "Laborum
> Nulla mihi nova nunc facies inopinaque surgit;
> Omnia præcepi, atque animo mecum ante peregi."[3]

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[1] "Howling, roaring, groaning with a thousand noises, expressing his torment in a dismal voice."—Verses of ATTIUS, in his *Philoctetes*, quoted by Cicero, *De Finib.*, ii. 29; *Tusc. Quæs.*, ii. 14.

[2] De Divin., ii. 69.

[3] "No aspect of pain or trouble can now rise, which by its

I am, however, a little roughly handled for a learner, and with a sudden and sharp alteration, being fallen in an instant from a very easy and happy condition of life into the most uneasy and painful that can be imagined. For besides that it is a disease very much to be feared in itself, it begins with me after a more sharp and severe manner than it is used to do with other men. My fits come so thick upon me that I am scarcely ever at ease; yet I have hitherto kept my mind so upright that, provided I can still continue it, I find myself in a much better condition of life than a thousand others, who have no fever nor other disease but what they create to themselves for want of meditation.

There is a certain sort of crafty humility that springs from presumption, as this, for example, that we confess our ignorance in many things, and are so courteous as to acknowledge that there are in the works of nature some qualities and conditions that are imperceptible to us, and of which our understanding cannot discover the means and causes; by this so honest and conscientious declaration we hope to obtain that people shall also believe us as to those that we say we do understand. We need not trouble ourselves to seek out foreign miracles and difficulties; methinks, amongst the things that we ordinarily see, there are such incomprehensible wonders as surpass all difficulties of miracles. What a wonderful thing it is that the drop of seed from which we are produced should carry in itself the impression not only of the bodily form, but even of the thoughts and inclinations of our fathers! Where can that drop of fluid matter contain that infinite number of forms? and how can they carry on these resemblances with so temerarious and irregular a progress that the son shall be like his great-grandfather, the nephew like his uncle? In the family of Lepidus at Rome there were three, not successively but by intervals, who were born with the same eye, covered with a cartilage.[1] At Thebes there was a race that carried from their mother's womb the form of the head of a lance, and he who was not born so was looked upon as

novelty can surprise me. To me no new shape of suffering can seem new or unexpected; I have anticipated them all, and weighed them over beforehand."—*Æneid*, vi. 103.

[1] Pliny, Nat. Hist., vii. 12.

illegitimate.[1] And Aristotle says that in a certain nation, where the women were in common, they assigned the children to their fathers by their resemblance.[2]

'Tis to be believed that I derive this infirmity from my father, for he died wonderfully tormented with a great stone in his bladder; he was never sensible of his disease till the sixty-seventh year of his age; and before that had never felt any menace or symptoms of it, either in his reins, sides, or any other part, and had lived, till then, in a happy, vigorous state of health, little subject to infirmities, and he continued seven years after, in this disease, dragging on a very painful end of life. I was born above five and twenty years before his disease seized him, and in the time of his most flourishing and healthful state of body, his third child in order of birth: where could his propension to this malady lie lurking all that while? And he being then so far from the infirmity, how could that small part of his substance wherewith he made me, carry away so great an impression for its share? and how so concealed, that till five and forty years after, I did not begin to be sensible of it? being the only one to this hour, amongst so many brothers and sisters, and all by one mother, that was ever troubled with it. He that can satisfy me in this point, I will believe him in as many other miracles as he pleases; always provided that, as their manner is, he do not give me a doctrine much more intricate and fantastic than the thing itself for current pay.

Let the physicians a little excuse the liberty I take, for by this same infusion and fatal insinuation it is that I have received a hatred and contempt of their doctrine; the antipathy I have against their art is hereditary. My father lived threescore and fourteen years, my grandfather sixty-nine, my great-grandfather almost fourscore years, without ever tasting any sort of physic: and, with them, whatever was not ordinary diet, was instead of a drug. Physic is grounded upon experience and examples: so is my opinion.

[1] Plutarch, in his treatise of the persons whose punishment is delayed by God, chap. xix.; but he does not say that those of this race, who had not this mark, as some had not, were deemed illegitimate."—COSTE.

[2] Herodotus, iv. 180.

And is not this an express and very advantageous experience? I do not know that they can find me in all their records three that were born, bred, and died under the same roof, who have lived so long by their conduct. They must here of necessity confess, that if reason be not, fortune at least is on my side, and with physicians, fortune goes a great deal further than reason. Let them not take me now at a disadvantage; let them not threaten me in the subdued condition wherein I now am; that were treachery. In truth, I have enough the better of them by these domestic examples, that they should rest satisfied. Human things are not usually so constant; it has been two hundred years, save eighteen, that this trial has lasted, for the first of them was born in the year 1402: 'tis now, indeed, very good reason that this experience should begin to fail us. Let them not, therefore, reproach me with the infirmities under which I now suffer; is it not enough that I for my part have lived seven and forty years in good health? though it should be the end of my career, 'tis of the longer sort.

My ancestors had an aversion to physic by some occult and natural instinct; for the very sight of a potion was loathsome to my father. The Seigneur de Gaviac, my uncle by the father's side, a churchman, and a valetudinary from his birth, and yet who made that crazy life hold out to sixty-seven years, being once fallen into a furious fever, it was ordered by the physicians he should be plainly told that if he would not make use of help (for so they call that which is very often quite contrary), he would infallibly be a dead man. The good man, though terrified with this dreadful sentence, yet replied, "I am then a dead man." But God soon after made the prognostic false. The youngest of the brothers,—there were four of them,—and by many years the youngest, the Sieur de Bussaguet, was the only one of the family who made use of medicine, by reason, I suppose, of the commerce he had with the other arts, for he was a councillor in the court of Parliament, and it succeeded so ill with him, that being, in outward appearance, of the strongest constitution, he yet died before any of the rest, the Sieur de Saint Michel only excepted.

'Tis possible I may have derived this natural antipathy

to physic from them; but had there been no other consideration in the case, I would have endeavoured to have overcome it; for all these conditions that spring in us without reason, are vicious; 'tis a kind of disease that we should wrestle with. It may be I had naturally this propension; but I have supported and fortified it by arguments and reasons which have established in me the opinion I am of. For I also hate the consideration of refusing physic for the nauseous taste: I should hardly be of that humour, who hold health to be worth purchasing by all the most painful cauteries and incisions that can be applied. And, with Epicurus,[1] I conceive that pleasures are to be avoided, if greater pains be the consequence, and pains to be coveted, that will terminate in greater pleasures. Health is a precious thing, and the only one, in truth, meriting that a man should lay out, not only his time, sweat, labour, and goods, but also his life itself to obtain it; forasmuch as, without it, life is wearisome and injurious to us: pleasure, wisdom, learning, and virtue, without it, wither away and vanish; and to the most laboured and solid discourses that philosophy would imprint in us to the contrary, we need no more but oppose the image of Plato being struck with an epilepsy or apoplexy; and, in this presupposition, to defy him to call the rich faculties of his soul to his assistance. All means that conduce to health can neither be too painful nor too dear to me. But I have some other appearances that make me strangely suspect all this merchandise. I do not deny but that there may be some art in it, that there are not amongst so many works of Nature, things proper for the conservation of health: that is most certain: I very well know there are some simples that moisten, and others that dry; I experimentally know that radishes are windy, and senna-leaves purging; and several other such experiences I have, as that mutton nourishes me, and wine warms me: and Solon said "that eating was physic against the malady hunger." I do not disapprove the use we make of things the earth produces, nor doubt, in the least, of the power and fertility of nature, and of its application to our necessities: I very well see that pikes and

[1] Cicero, Tusc. Quæs., v. 33. Diogenes Laertius, x. 129.

swallows live by her laws; but I mistrust the inventions of our mind, our knowledge and art, to countenance which, we have abandoned Nature and her rules, and wherein we keep no bounds nor moderation. As we call the piling up of the first laws that fall into our hands, justice, and their practice and dispensation very often foolish and very unjust; and as those who scoff at and accuse it, do not, nevertheless, blame that noble virtue itself, but only condemn the abuse and profanation of that sacred title; so in physic I very much honour that glorious name, its propositions, its promises, so useful for the service of mankind; but the ordinances it foists upon us, betwixt ourselves, I neither honour nor esteem.

In the first place, experience makes me dread it; for amongst all my acquaintance, I see no people so soon sick, and so long before they are well, as those who take much physic; their very health is altered and corrupted by their frequent prescriptions. Physicians are not content to deal only with the sick, but they will moreover corrupt health itself, for fear men should at any time escape their authority. Do they not, from a continual and perfect health, extract suspicion of some great sickness to ensue? I have been sick often enough, and have always found my sicknesses easy enough to be supported (though I have made trial of almost all sorts) and as short as those of any other, without their help, or without swallowing their ill-tasting doses. The health I have is full and free, without other rule or discipline than my own custom and pleasure. Every place serves me well enough to stay in, for I need no other conveniences, when I am sick, than what I must have when I am well. I never disturb myself that I have no physician, no apothecary, nor any other assistance, which I see most other sick men more afflicted at than they are with their disease. What! Do the doctors themselves show us more felicity and duration in their own lives, that may manifest to us some apparent effect of their skill?

There is not a nation in the world that has not been many ages without physic; and these the first ages, that is to say, the best and most happy; and the tenth part of the world knows nothing of it yet; many nations are ignorant of it to this day, where men live more healthful

and longer than we do here, and even amongst us the common people live well enough without it. The Romans were six hundred years before they received it; and after having made trial of it, banished it from their city at the instance of Cato the Censor,[1] who made it appear how easy it was to live without it, having himself lived fourscore and five years, and kept his wife alive to an extreme old age, not without physic, but without a physician: for everything that we find to be healthful to life may be called physic. He kept his family in health, as Plutarch says,[2] if I mistake not, with hare's milk; as Pliny reports,[3] that the Arcadians cured all manner of diseases with that of a cow; and Herodotus says,[4] the Lybians generally enjoy rare health, by a custom they have, after their children are arrived to four years of age, to burn and cauterise the veins of their head and temples, by which means they cut off all defluxions of rheum for their whole lives. And the country people of our province make use of nothing, in all sorts of distempers, but the strongest wine they can get, mixed with a great deal of saffron and spice, and always with the same success.

And to say the truth, of all this diversity and confusion of prescriptions, what other end and effect is there after all, but to purge the belly? which a thousand ordinary simples will do as well; and I do not know whether such evacuations be so much to our advantage as they pretend, and whether nature does not require a residence of her excrements to a certain proportion, as wine does of its lees to keep it alive: you often see healthful men fall into vomitings and fluxes of the belly by some extrinsic accident, and make a great evacuation of excrements, without any preceding need, or any following benefit, but rather with hurt to their constitution. 'Tis from the great Plato,[5] that I lately learned, that of three sorts of motions which are natural to us, purging is the worst, and that no man,

[1] Pliny, Nat. Hist., xxix. 1. He, however, says that physicians were not banished from Rome until long after the death of Cato.
[2] In vita, c. 12. [3] Nat. Hist., xxv. 8.
[4] Book iv. c. 187. Herodotus, however, only says that by this means they profess to attain the end.
[5] In the Timæus.

unless he be a fool, ought to take anything to that purpose but in the extremest necessity. Men disturb and irritate the disease by contrary oppositions; it must be the way of living that must gently dissolve, and bring it to its end. The violent gripings and contest betwixt the drug and the disease, are ever to our loss, since the combat is fought within ourselves, and that the drug is an assistant not to be trusted, being in its own nature an enemy to our health, and by trouble having only access into our condition. Let it alone a little: the general order of things that takes care of fleas and moles, also takes care of men, if they will have the same patience that fleas and moles have, to leave it to itself. 'Tis to much purpose we cry out "*Bihore*,"[1] 'tis a way to make us hoarse, but not to hasten the matter. 'Tis a proud and uncompassionate order: our fears, our despair displease and stop it from, instead of inviting it to, our relief; it owes its course to the disease, as well as to health; and will not suffer itself to be corrupted in favour of the one to the prejudice of the other's right, for it would then fall into disorder. Let us, in God's name, follow it; it leads those that follow, and those who will not follow, it drags along, both their fury and physic together.[2] Order a purge for your brain, it will there be much better employed than upon your stomach.

One asking a Lacedæmonian what had made him live so long, he made answer, "the ignorance of physic;" and the Emperor Adrian continually exclaimed as he was dying, that the crowd of physicians had killed him.[3] A bad wrestler turned physician: "Courage," says Diogenes to him, "thou hast done well, for now thou will throw those who have formerly thrown thee."[4] But they have this advantage, according to Nicocles, that the sun gives light to their success and the earth covers their failures.[5] And, besides, they have a very advantageous way of making use of all sorts of events: for what fortune, nature, or any other

[1] A term used by the Languedoc waggoners to hasten their horses.

[2] Seneca, Ep. 107.

[3] Xiphilinus, in epitome Dion. vita Adriani.

[4] Diogenes Laertius, vi. 62.

[5] Collection of the monks Antonius and Maximus, c. 146.

cause (of which the number is infinite), produces of good and healthful in us, it is the privilege of physic to attribute to itself; all the happy successes that happen to the patient, must be thence derived; the accidents that have cured me, and a thousand others, who do not employ physicians, physicians usurp to themselves: and as to ill accidents, they either absolutely disown them, in laying the fault upon the patient, by such frivolous reasons as they are never at a loss for; as "he lay with his arms out of bed," or "he was disturbed with the rattling of a coach:"

> "Rhedarum transitus arcto
> Vicorum inflexu:"[1]

or "somebody had set open the casement," or "he had lain upon his left side:" or "he had some disagreeable fancies in his head:" in sum, a word, a dream, or a look, seems to them excuse sufficient wherewith to palliate their own errors: or, if they so please, they even make use of our growing worse, and do their business in this way which can never fail them: which is by buzzing us in the ear, when the disease is more inflamed by their medicaments, that it had been much worse but for those remedies; he, whom from an ordinary cold they have thrown into a double tertian-ague, had but for them been in a continued fever. They do not much care what mischief they do, since it turns to their own profit. In earnest, they have reason to require a very favourable belief from their patients; and, indeed, it ought to be a very easy one, to swallow things so hard to be believed. Plato said[2] very well, that physicians were the only men who might lie at pleasure, since our health depends upon the vanity and falsity of their promises.

Æsop, a most excellent author, and of whom few men discover all the graces, pleasantly represents to us the tyrannical authority physicians usurp over poor creatures, weakened and subdued by sickness and fear, when he tells us,[3] that a sick person, being asked by his physician what operation he found of the potion he had given him: "I

[1] "He heard the wheels running in the narrow turning of the street."—JUVENAL, iii. 236.

[2] In the Republic, iii.

[3] Fable 13.

have sweated very much," says the sick man. "That's good," says the physician. Another time, having asked how he felt himself after his physic: "I have been very cold, and have had a great shivering upon me," said he. "That is good," replied the physician. After the third potion he asked him again how he did: "Why, I find myself swollen, and puffed up," said he, "as if I had a dropsy." "That is very well," said the physician. One of his servants coming presently after to inquire how he felt himself, "Truly, friend," said he, "with being too well I am about to die."

There was a more just law in Egypt, by which the physician, for the first three days, was to take charge of his patient, at the patient's own risk and cost: but those three days being past, it was to be at his own. For what reason is it, that their patron, Æsculapius, should be struck with thunder for restoring Hippolitus from death to life,

> "Nam Pater omnipotens, aliquem indignatus ab umbris
> Mortalem infernis ad lumina surgere vitæ,
> Ipse repertorem medicinæ talis, et artis,
> Fulmine Phoebigenam Stygias detrusit ad undas;"[1]

and his followers be pardoned, who send so many souls from life to death? A physician, boasting to Nicocles that his art was of great authority: "It is so, indeed," said Nicocles, "that can with impunity kill so many people."[2]

As to what remains, had I been of their counsel, I would have rendered my discipline more sacred and mysterious; they begun well, but they have not ended so. It was a good beginning to make gods and demons the authors of their science, and to have used a peculiar way of speaking and writing, notwithstanding that philosophy concludes it folly to persuade a man to his own good by an unintelligible way: "Ut si quis medicus imperet, ut sumat:"

[1] "Then the Almighty Father, offended that any mortal should rise to the light of life from the infernal shades, struck the son of Phœbus with his forked lightning, to the Stygian lake."—*Æneid*, vii. 770.

[2] "In p. 622, chap. 146, of the collection of the monks, just mentioned, printed at the end of Stobæus. Barbeyrac thinks that this Nicocles, who here banters a certain quack, is the famous King of Salamina, to whom Socrates addressed one of his orations."—COSTE.

"Terrigenam, herbigradam, domiportam, sanguine cassam."[1]

It was a good rule in their art, and that accompanies all other vain, fantastic, and supernatural arts, that the patient's belief should prepossess them with good hope and assurance of their effects and operation: a rule they hold to that degree, as to maintain that the most inexpert and ignorant physician is more proper for a patient who has confidence in him, than the most learned and experienced, whom he is not so acquainted with. Nay, even the very choice of most of their drugs is in some sort mysterious and divine; the left foot of a tortoise, the urine of a lizard, the dung of an elephant, the liver of a mole, blood drawn from under the right wing of a white pigeon; and for us who have the stone (so scornfully they use us in our miseries) the excrement of rats beaten to powder, and such like trash and fooleries which rather carry a face of magical enchantment than of any solid science. I omit the odd number of their pills, the destination of certain days and feasts of the year, the superstition of gathering their simples at certain hours, and that so austere and very wise countenance and carriage which Pliny himself so much derides. But they have, as I said, failed in that they have not added to this fine beginning, the making their meetings and consultations more religious and secret, where no profane person should have admission, no more than in the secret ceremonies of Æsculapius; for by the reason of this it falls out that their irresolution, the weakness of their arguments, divinations and foundations, the sharpness of their disputes,[2] full of hatred, jealousy, and self-consideration, coming to be discovered by every one, a man must be marvellously blind not to see that he runs a very great hazard in their hands. Who ever saw one physician approve of another's prescription, without taking something away, or adding something to it? by which they sufficiently betray their tricks, and make it manifest to us that they therein more consider their own reputation, and conse-

[1] Cicero, De Divin., l. 2. "Describing it by the epithets of an animal trailing with its slime over the herbage, without blood or bones, and carrying its house upon its back, meaning simply a snail."—COSTE.

[2] Pliny, Nat. Hist., xxix. 1.

quently their profit, than their patient's interest. He was a much wiser man of their tribe, who of old gave it as a rule, that only one physician should undertake a sick person; for if he do nothing to purpose, one single man's default can bring no great scandal upon the art of medicine; and, on the contrary, the glory will be great, if he happen to have success; whereas, when there are many, they at every turn bring a disrepute upon their calling, forasmuch as they oftener do hurt than good. They ought to be satisfied with the perpetual disagreement which is found in the opinions of the principal masters and ancient authors of this science, which is only known to men well read, without discovering to the vulgar the controversies and various judgments which they still nourish and continue amongst themselves.

Will you have one example of the ancient controversy in physic? Herophilus [1] lodges the original cause of all diseases in the humours; Erasistratus, in the blood of the arteries; Asclepiades, in the invisible atoms of the pores; Alcmæon, in the exuberance or defect of our bodily strength; Diocles, in the inequality of the elements of which the body is composed, and in the quality of the air we breathe; Strato, in the abundance, crudity, and corruption of the nourishment we take; and Hippocrates lodges it in the spirits. There is a certain friend of theirs,[2] whom they know better than I, who declares upon this subject, "that the most important science in practice amongst us, as that which is intrusted with our health and conservation, is, by ill luck, the most uncertain, the most perplexed, and agitated with the greatest mutations." There is no great danger in our mistaking the height of the sun, or the fraction of some astronomical computation: but here, where our whole being is concerned, 'tis not wisdom to abandon ourselves to the mercy of the agitation of so many contrary winds.

Before the Peloponnesian war, there was no great talk of this science. Hippocrates brought it into repute; whatever he established, Chrysippus overthrew; after that, Erasistratus, Aristotle's grandson, overthrew what Chry-

[1] Celsus, Preface to the First Book.
[2] Pliny, Nat. Hist., xxix. 1.

sippus had written; after these, the Empirics started up, who took a quite contrary way to the ancients in the management of this art; when the credit of these began a little to decay, Herophilus set another sort of practice on foot, which Asclepiades in turn stood up against, and overthrew; then, in their turn, the opinions first of Themiso, and then of Musa, and after that those of Vectius Valens, a physician famous through the intelligence he had with Messalina, came in vogue; the empire of physic in Nero's time was established in Thessalus, who abolished and condemned all that had been held till his time; this man's doctrine was refuted by Crinas of Marseilles, who first brought all medicinal operations under the Ephemerides and motions of the stars, and reduced eating, sleeping, and drinking to hours that were most pleasing to Mercury, and the moon; his authority was soon after supplanted by Charinus, a physician of the same city of Marseilles; a man who not only controverted all the ancient methods of physic, but moreover the usage of hot baths, that had been generally, and for so many ages in common use; he made men bathe in cold water, even in winter, and plunged his sick patients in the natural waters of streams. No Roman till Pliny's time had ever vouchsafed to practise physic; that office was only performed by Greeks and foreigners, as 'tis now amongst us French, by those who sputter Latin; for, as a very great physician says, we do not easily accept the medicine we understand, no more than we do the drugs we ourselves gather. If the nations whence we fetch our guaiacum, sarsaparilla, and China wood, have physicians, how great a value must we imagine, by the same recommendation of strangeness, rarity, and dear purchase, do they set upon our cabbage and parsley? for who would dare to contemn things so far fetched, and sought out at the hazard of so long and dangerous a voyage?

Since these ancient mutations in physic, there have been infinite others down to our own times, and, for the most part, mutations entire and universal, as those, for example, produced by Paracelsus, Fioravanti, and Argentier; for they, as I am told, not only alter one recipe, but the whole contexture and rules of the body of physic, accusing all others of ignorance and imposition who have practised

before them. At this rate, in what a condition the poor patient must be, I leave you to judge.

If we were even assured that, when they make a mistake that mistake of theirs would do us no harm, though it did us no good, it were a reasonable bargain to venture the making ourselves better without any danger of being made worse. Æsop tells a story,[1] that one who had bought a Morisco slave, believing that his black complexion was accidental in him, and occasioned by the ill usage of his former master, caused him to enter into a course of physic, and with great care to be often bathed and purged: it happened that the Moor was nothing amended in his tawny complexion, but he wholly lost his former health. How often do we see physicians impute the death of their patients to one another? I remember that some years ago, there was an epidemical disease, very dangerous, and for the most part mortal, that raged in the towns about us: the storm being over which had swept away an infinite number of men, one of the most famous physicians of all the country, presently after published a book upon that subject, wherein, upon better thoughts, he confesses, that the letting blood in that disease was the principal cause of so many mishaps. Moreover, their authors hold that there is no physic that has not something hurtful in it. And if even those of the best operation in some measure offend us, what must those do that are totally misapplied? For my own part, though there were nothing else in the case, I am of opinion, that to those who loathe the taste of physic, it must needs be a dangerous and prejudicial endeavour to force it down at so incommodious a time, and with so much aversion, and believe that it marvellously distempers a sick person at a time when he has so much need of repose. And moreover, if we but consider the occasions upon which they usually ground the cause of our diseases, they are so light and nice, that I thence conclude a very little error in the dispensation of their drugs may do a great deal of mischief. Now, if the mistake of a physician be so dangerous, we are in but a scurvy condition; for it is almost impossible but he must often fall into those mistakes: he had need of too many parts, con-

[1] Fable 76.

siderations, and circumstances, rightly to level his design: he must know the sick person's complexion, his temperament, his humours, inclinations, actions, nay, his very thoughts and imaginations; he must be assured of the external circumstances, of the nature of the place, the quality of the air and season, the situation of the planets, and their influences: he must know in the disease, the causes, prognostics, affections, and critical days; in the drugs, the weight, the power of working, the country, figure, age, and dispensation, and he must know how rightly to proportion and mix them together, to beget a just and perfect symmetry; wherein if there be the least error, if amongst so many springs there be but any one out of order, 'tis enough to destroy us. God knows with how great difficulty most of these things are to be understood: for (for example) how shall a physician find out the true sign of the disease, every disease being capable of an infinite number of indications? How many doubts and controversies have they amongst themselves upon the interpretation of urines? otherwise, whence should the continual debates we see amongst them about the knowledge of the disease proceed? how could we excuse the error they so oft fall into, of taking fox for martin? In the diseases I have had, though there were ever so little difficulty in the case, I never found three of one opinion: which I instance, because I love to introduce examples wherein I am myself concerned.

A gentleman at Paris was lately cut for the stone by order of the physicians, in whose bladder, being accordingly so cut, there was found no more stone than in the palm of his hand; and, in the same place, a bishop, who was my particular good friend, having been earnestly pressed by the majority of the physicians in town, whom he consulted, to suffer himself to be cut, to which also, upon their word, I used my interest to persuade him, when he was dead, and opened, it appeared that he had no malady but in the kidneys. They are least excusable for any error in this disease, by reason that it is in some sort palpable; and 'tis thence, that I conclude surgery to be much more certain, by reason that it sees and feels what it does, and so goes less upon conjecture; whereas the physicians have no *speculum*

matricis, by which to examine our brains, lungs, and liver.

Even the very promises of physic are incredible in themselves; for, having to provide against divers and contrary accidents that often afflict us at one and the same time, and that have almost a necessary relation, as the heat of the liver, and the coldness of the stomach, they will needs persuade us, that of their ingredients one will heat the stomach, and the other will cool the liver: one has its commission to go directly to the kidneys, nay, even to the bladder, without scattering its operations by the way, and is to retain its power and virtue through all those turns and meanders, even to the place to the service of which it is designed, by its own occult property: this will dry the brain; that will moisten the lungs. Of all this bundle of things having mixed up a potion, is it not a kind of madness to imagine or to hope that these differing virtues should separate themselves from one another in this mixture and confusion, to perform so many various errands? I should very much fear that they would either lose or change their tickets, and disturb one another's quarters. And who can imagine but that, in this liquid confusion, these faculties must corrupt, confound, and spoil one another? And is not the danger still more, when the making up of this medicine is intrusted to the skill and fidelity of still another, to whose mercy we again abandon our lives?

As we have doublet and breeches-makers, distinct trades, to clothe us, and are so much the better fitted, seeing that each of them meddles only with his own business, and has less to trouble his head with than the tailor who undertakes all; and as in matter of diet, great persons, for their better convenience and to the end they may be better served, have cooks for the different offices, this for soups and potages, that for roasting, instead of which if one cook should undertake the whole service, he could not so well perform it; so also as to the cure of our maladies. The Egyptians had reason to reject this general trade of physician, and to divide the profession: to each disease, to each part of the body, its particular workman;[1] for that

[1] Herodotus, ii. 84.

part was more properly and with less confusion cared for, seeing the person looked to nothing else. Ours are not aware that he who provides for all, provides for nothing; and that the entire government of this microcosm is more than they are able to undertake. Whilst they were afraid of stopping a dysentery, lest they should put the patient into a fever, they killed me a friend,[1] who was worth more than the whole pack of them put together. They counterpoise their own divinations with the present evils; and because they will not cure the brain to the prejudice of the stomach, they injure both with their dissentient and tumultuary drugs.

As to the variety and weakness of the rationale of this profession, they are more manifest in it than in any other art; aperitive medicines are proper for a man subject to the stone, by reason that opening and dilating the passages they help forward the slimy matter whereof gravel and stone are engendered, and convey that downward which begins to harden and gather in the reins; aperitive things are dangerous for a man subject to the stone, by reason that, opening and dilating the passages, they help forward the matter proper to create the gravel toward the reins, which by their own propension being apt to seize it, 'tis not to be imagined but that a great deal of what has been conveyed thither must remain behind; moreover, if the medicine happen to meet with anything too large to be carried through all the narrow passages it must pass to be expelled, that obstruction, whatever it is, being stirred by these aperitive things and thrown into those narrow passages, coming to stop them, will occasion a certain and most painful death. They have the like uniformity in the counsels they give us for the regimen of life: it is good to make water often, for we experimentally see that in letting it lie long in the bladder we give it time to settle the sediment which will concrete into a stone; it is good not to make water often, for the heavy excrements it carries along with it will not be voided without violence, as we see by experience that a torrent that runs with force washes the ground it rolls over much cleaner than the course of a slow and tardy stream; so, it is good to have often to do

[1] Etienne de la Boëtie.

with women, for that opens the passages and helps to evacuate gravel; it is also very ill to have often to do with women, because it heats, tires, and weakens the reins. It is good to bathe frequently in hot water, forasmuch as that relaxes and mollifies the places where the gravel and stone lie; it is also ill by reason that this application of external heat helps the reins to bake, harden, and petrify the matter so disposed. For those who are taking baths it is most healthful to eat little at night, to the end that the waters they are to drink the next morning may have a better operation upon an empty stomach; on the other hand it is better to eat little at dinner, that it hinder not the operation of the waters, while it is not yet perfect, and not to oppress the stomach so soon after the other labour, but leave the office of digestion to the night, which will much better perform it than the day, when the body and soul are in perpetual moving and action. Thus do they juggle and cant in all their discourses at our expense; and they cannot give me one proposition against which I cannot erect a contrary of equal force. Let them, then, no longer exclaim against those who in this trouble of sickness suffer themselves to be gently guided by their own appetite and the advice of nature, and commit themselves to the common fortune.

I have seen in my travels almost all the famous baths of Christendom, and for some years past have begun to make use of them myself: for I look upon bathing as generally wholesome, and believe that we suffer no little inconveniences in our health by having left off the custom that was generally observed, in former times, almost by all nations, and is yet in many, of bathing every day; and I cannot imagine but that we are much the worse by having our limbs crusted and our pores stopped with dirt. And as to the drinking of them, fortune has in the first place rendered them not at all unacceptable to my taste; and secondly, they are natural and simple, which at least carry no danger with them, though they may do us no good, of which the infinite crowd of people of all sorts and come plexions who repair thither I take to be a sufficient warranty; and although I have not there observed any extraordinary and miraculous effects, but that on the contrary, having more narrowly than ordinary inquired

into it, I have found all the reports of such operations that have been spread abroad in those places ill-grounded and false, and those that believe them (as people are willing to be gulled in what they desire) deceived in them, yet I have seldom known any who have been made worse by those waters, and a man cannot honestly deny but that they beget a better appetite, help digestion, and do in some sort revive us, if we do not go too late and in too weak a condition, which I would dissuade every one from doing. They have not the virtue to raise men from desperate and inveterate diseases, but they may help some light indisposition, or prevent some threatening alteration. He who does not bring along with him so much cheerfulness as to enjoy the pleasure of the company he will there meet, and of the walks and exercises to which the amenity of those places invite us, will doubtless lose the best and surest part of their effect. For this reason I have hitherto chosen to go to those of the most pleasant situation, where there was the best conveniency of lodging, provision, and company, as the baths of Bagnères in France, those of Plombieres, on the frontiers of Germany and Lorraine, those of Baden in Switzerland, those of Lucca in Tuscany, and especially those of Della Villa, which I have the most and at various seasons frequented.

Every nation has particular opinions touching their use, and particular rules and methods in using them; and all of them, according to what I have seen, almost with like effect. Drinking them is not at all received in Germany; the Germans bathe for all diseases, and will lie dabbling in the water almost from sun to sun; in Italy, where they drink nine days, they bathe at least thirty, and commonly drink the water mixed with some other drugs to make it work the better. Here we are ordered to walk to digest it; there we are kept in bed after taking it till it be wrought off, our stomachs and feet having continually hot cloths applied to them all the while; and as the Germans have a particular practice generally to use cupping and scarification in the bath, so the Italians have their *doccie*, which are certain little streams of this hot water brought through pipes, and with these bathe an hour in the morning, and as much in the afternoon, for a month together, either the

head, stomach, or any other part where the evil lies. There are infinite other varieties of customs in every country, or rather there is no manner of resemblance to one another. By this, you may see that this little part of physic to which I have only submitted, though the least depending upon art of all others, has yet a great share of the confusion and uncertainty everywhere else manifest in the profession.

The poets put what they would say with greater emphasis and grace; witness these two epigrams:

> "Alcon hesterno signum Jovis attigit: ille,
> Quamvis marmoreus, vim patitur medici.
> Ecce hodie, jussus transferri ex æde vetusta,
> Effertur, quamvis sit Deus atque lapis:" [1]

and the other,

> "Lotus nobiscum est, hilaris cœnavit; et idem
> Inventus mane est mortuus Andragoras.
> Tam subitæ mortis causam, Faustine, requiris?
> In somnis medicum viderat Hermocratem:" [2]

upon which I will relate two stories.

The Baron de Caupene, in Chalosse, and I, have betwixt us the advowson of a benefice of great extent, at the foot of our mountains, called Lahontan. It is with the inhabitants of this angle, as 'tis said of those of the Val d'Angrougne; they lived a peculiar sort of life, their fashions, clothes, and manners distinct from other people; ruled and governed by certain particular laws and usages, received from father to son, to which they submitted, without other constraint than the reverence to custom. This little state had continued from all antiquity in so happy a condition, that no neighbouring judge was ever put to the trouble of inquiring into their doings; no advocate was ever retained to give them counsel, no stranger ever called in to compose their differences; nor was ever any of them seen to go a-begging.

[1] "Alcon yesterday touched Jove's statue, which, although marble, suffered the force of medicine: to-day order being given it should be taken from the old temple, where it stood, it was carried out. Although a god, and made of stone, it is about to be buried."—AUSONIUS, *Ep.* 74.

[2] "Andragoras bathed, supped gaily, went well to bed last night; in the morning he was found dead. Wouldst thou know, Faustinus, what caused this sudden death? He dreamed that he saw Doctor Hermocrates."—MARTIAL, vi. 53.

They avoided all alliances and traffic with the outer world, that they might not corrupt the purity of their own government; till, as they say, one of them, in the memory of man, having a mind spurred on with a noble ambition, took it into his head, to bring his name into credit and reputation, to make one of his sons something more than ordinary, and having put him to learn to write in a neighbouring town, made him at last a brave village notary. This fellow, having acquired such dignity, began to disdain their ancient customs, and to buzz into the people's ears the pomp of the other parts of the nation; the first prank he played was to advise a friend of his, whom somebody had offended by sawing off the horns of one of his goats, to make his complaint to the royal judges thereabout, and so he went on from one to another, till he had spoiled and confounded all. In the tail of this corruption, they say, there happened another, and of worse consequence, by means of a physician who, falling in love with one of their daughters, had a mind to marry her and to live amongst them. This man first of all began to teach them the names of fevers, colds, and imposthumes; the seat of the heart, liver, and intestines, a science till then utterly unknown to them; and instead of garlic, with which they were wont to cure all manner of diseases, how painful or extreme soever, he taught them, though it were but for a cough, or any little cold, to take strange mixtures, and began to make a trade not only of their health, but of their lives. They swear till then they never perceived the evening air to be offensive to the head; that to drink, when they were hot, was hurtful, and that the winds of autumn were more unwholesome than those of spring; that, since this use of physic, they find themselves oppressed with a legion of unaccustomed diseases, and that they perceive a general decay in their ancient vigour, and their lives are cut shorter by the half. This is the first of my stories.

The other is, that before I was afflicted with the stone, hearing that the blood of a he-goat was with many in very great esteem, and looked upon as a celestial manna rained down upon these latter ages for the good and preservation of the lives of men, and having heard it spoken of by men of understanding for an admirable drug, and of infallible

operation; I, who have ever thought myself subject to all the accidents that can befall other men, had a mind, in my perfect health, to furnish myself with this miracle, and therefore gave order to have a goat fed at home according to the recipe: for he must be taken in the hottest month of all summer, and must only have aperitive herbs given him to eat, and white wine to drink. I came home by chance the very day he was to be killed; and some one came and told me, that the cook had found two or three great balls in his paunch, that rattled against one another amongst what he had eaten. I was curious to have all his entrails brought before me, where, having caused the skin that enclosed them to be cut, there tumbled out three great lumps, as light as sponges, so that they appeared to be hollow; but, as to the rest, hard and firm without, and spotted and mixed all over with various dead colours; one was perfectly round, and of the bigness of an ordinary ball; the other two something less, of an imperfect roundness, as seeming not to be arrived at their full growth. I find, by inquiry of people accustomed to open these animals, that it is a rare and unusual accident. 'Tis likely these are stones of the same nature with ours: and if so, it must needs be a very vain hope in those who have the stone, to extract their cure from the blood of a beast that was himself about to die of the same disease. For to say that the blood does not participate of this contagion, and does not thence alter its wonted virtue, it is rather to be believed that nothing is engendered in a body but by the conspiracy and communication of all the parts: the whole mass works together, though one part contributes more to the work than another, according to the diversity of operations; wherefore it is very likely that there was some petrifying quality in all the parts of this goat. It was not so much for fear of the future, and for myself, that I was curious in this experiment, but because it falls out in mine, as it does in many other families, that the women store up such little trumperies for the service of the people, using the same recipe in fifty several diseases, and such a recipe as they will not take themselves, and yet triumph when they happen to be successful.

As to what remains I honour physicians, not according

to the precept[1] for their necessity (for to this passage may be opposed another of the prophet reproving King Asa for having recourse to a physician), but for themselves, having known many very good men of that profession, and most worthy to be beloved. I do not attack them; 'tis their art I inveigh against, and do not much blame them for making their advantage of our folly, for most men do the same. Many callings, both of greater and of less dignity than theirs, have no other foundation or support than public abuse. When I am sick I send for them if they be near, only to have their company, and pay them as others do. I give them leave to command me to keep myself warm, because I naturally love to do it, and to appoint leeks or lettuce for my broth; to order me white wine or claret; and so as to all other things, which are indifferent to my palate and custom. I know very well that I do nothing for them in so doing, because sharpness and strangeness are incidents of the very essence of physic. Lycurgus ordered wine for the sick Spartans: Why? because they abominated the drinking it when they were well; as a gentleman, a neighbour of mine, takes it as an excellent medicine in his fever, because naturally he mortally hates the taste of it. How many do we see amongst them of my humour, who despise taking physic themselves, are men of a liberal diet, and live a quite contrary sort of life to what they prescribe others? What is this but flatly to abuse our simplicity? for their own lives and health are no less dear to them than ours are to us, and consequently they would accommodate their practice to their rules, if they did not themselves know how false these are.

'Tis the fear of death and of pain, impatience of disease, and a violent and indiscreet desire of a present cure, that so blind us: 'tis pure cowardice that makes our belief so pliable and easy to be imposed upon: and yet most men do not so much believe as they acquiesce and permit; for I hear them find fault and complain as well as we; but they resolve at last, "What should I do then?" As if impatience were of itself a better remedy than patience. Is there any one of those who have suffered themselves to

[1] Eccles. xxxviii. 1.

be persuaded into this miserable subjection, who does not equally surrender himself to all sorts of impostures? who does not give up himself to the mercy of whoever has the impudence to promise him a cure? The Babylonians carried their sick into the public square; the physician was the people: every one who passed by, being in humanity and civility obliged to inquire of their condition, gave some advice according to his own experience.[1] We do little better; there is not so simple a woman whose chatterings and drenches we do not make use of: and according to my humour, if I were to take physic, I would sooner choose to take theirs than any other, because at least, if they do no good, they will do no harm. What Homer[2] and Plato said of the Egyptians, that they were all physicians, may be said of all nations; there is not a man amongst any of them who does not boast of some rare recipe, and who will not venture it upon his neighbour, if he will let him. I was the other day in company where some of my[3] fraternity told us of a new sort of pills made up of a hundred and odd ingredients: it made us very merry, and was a singular consolation, for what rock could withstand so great a battery? And yet I hear from those who have made trial of it, that the least atom of gravel will not stir for't.

I cannot take my hand from the paper, before I have added a word or two more concerning the assurance they give us of the infallibility of their drugs, from the experiments they have made.

The greatest part, I should say above two-thirds, of the medicinal virtues, consist in the quintessence, or occult property of simples, of which we can have no other instruction than use and custom; for quintessence is no other than a quality of which we cannot by our reason find out the cause. In such proofs, those they pretend to have acquired by the inspiration of some dæmon, I am content to receive (for I meddle not with miracles); and also the proofs which are drawn from things that, upon some other account, often fall into use amongst us; as if in the wool, wherewith we are wont to clothe ourselves, there has accidentally some occult desiccative property been found out

[1] Herodotus, i. 197. [2] Odyssey, iv. 231.

[3] "Meaning who were troubled with the stone."—COTTON.

of curing kibed heels, or as if in the radish we eat for food, there has been found out some aperitive operation. Galen reports, that a man happened to be cured of a leprosy by drinking wine out of a vessel into which a viper had crept by chance. In this example we find the means and a very likely guide and conduct to this experience, as we also do in those that physicians pretend to have been directed to by the example of some beasts. But in most of their other experiments wherein they affirm they have been conducted by fortune, and to have had no other guide than chance, I find the progress of this information incredible. Suppose man looking round about him upon the infinite number of things, plants, animals, metals; I do not know where he would begin his trial; and though his first fancy should fix him upon an elk's horn, wherein there must be a very pliant and easy belief, he will yet find himself as perplexed in his second operation. There are so many maladies and so many circumstances presented to him, that before he can attain the certainty of the point to which the perfection of his experience should arrive, human sense will be at the end of its lesson: and before he can, amongst this infinity of things, find out what this horn is; amongst so many diseases, what is epilepsy; the many complexions in a melancholy person; the many seasons in winter; the many nations in the French; the many ages in age; the many celestial mutations in the conjunction of Venus and Saturn; the many parts in man's body, nay, in a finger; and being, in all this, directed neither by argument, conjecture, example, nor divine inspirations, but merely by the sole motion of fortune, it must be by a perfectly artificial, regular, and methodical fortune. And after the cure is performed, how can he assure himself that it was not because the disease had arrived at its period or an effect of chance? or the operation of something else that he had eaten, drunk, or touched that day? or by virtue of his grandmother's prayers? And, moreover, had this experiment been perfect, how many times was it repeated, and this long beadroll of haps and concurrences strung anew by chance to conclude a certain rule? And when the rule is concluded, by whom, I pray you? Of so many millions, there are but three men who take upon them

to record their experiments: must fortune needs just hit one of these? What if another, and a hundred others, have made contrary experiments? We might, peradventure, have some light in this, were all the judgments and arguments of men known to us: but that three witnesses, three doctors, should lord it over all mankind, is against reason: it were necessary that human nature should have deputed and culled them out, and that they were declared our comptrollers by express letters of attorney.

"TO MADAME DE DURAS.[1]

"MADAME,—The last time you honoured me with a visit, you found me at work upon this chapter, and as these trifles may one day fall into your hands, I would also that they testify in how great honour the author will take any favour you shall please to show them. You will there find the same air and mien you have observed in his conversation; and though I could have borrowed some better or more favourable garb than my own, I would not have done it: for I require nothing more of these writings, but to present me to your memory such as I naturally am. The same conditions and faculties you have been pleased to frequent and receive with much more honour and courtesy than they deserve, I would put together (but without alteration or change) in one solid body, that may peradventure continue some years, or some days, after I am gone; where you may find them again when you shall please to refresh your memory, without putting you to any greater trouble; neither are they worth it. I desire you should continue the favour of your friendship to me, by the same qualities by which it was acquired.

"I am not at all ambitious that any one should love and esteem me more dead than living. The humour of Tiberius[2] is ridiculous, but yet common, who was more solicitous to extend his renown to posterity than to render himself acceptable to men of his own time. If I were one of those to whom the world could owe commendation, I would give

[1] Marguerite de Gramont, widow of Jean de Durfort, Seigneur de Duras, who was killed near Leghorn, leaving no posterity.

[2] Tacitus, Annal., vi. 46.

out of it one-half to have the other in hand; let their praises come quick and crowding about me, more thick than long, more full than durable; and let them cease, in God's name, with my own knowledge of them, and when the sweet sound can no longer pierce my ears. It were an idle humour to essay, now that I am about to forsake the commerce of men, to offer myself to them by a new recommendation. I make no account of the goods I could not employ in the service of my life. Such as I am, I will be elsewhere than in paper: my art and industry have been ever directed to render myself good for something; my studies, to teach me to do, and not to write. I have made it my whole business to frame my life: this has been my trade and my work; I am less a writer of books than anything else. I have coveted understanding for the service of my present and real conveniences, and not to lay up a stock for my posterity. He who has anything of value in him, let him make it appear in his conduct, in his ordinary discourses, in his courtships, and his quarrels: in play, in bed, at table, in the management of his affairs, in his economics. Those whom I see make good books in ill breeches, should first have mended their breeches, if they would have been ruled by me. Ask a Spartan, whether he had rather be a good orator or a good soldier; and if I was asked the same question, I would rather choose to be a good cook, had I not one already to serve me. Good God! Madame, how should I hate the reputation of being a pretty fellow at writing, and an ass and an inanity in everything else! Yet I had rather be a fool in anything than to have made so ill a choice wherein to employ my talent. And I am so far from expecting to gain any new reputation by these follies, that I shall think I come off pretty well if I lose nothing by them of that little I had before. For besides that this dead and mute painting will take from my natural being, it has no resemblance to my better condition, but is much lapsed from my former vigour and cheerfulness, growing faded and withered: I am towards the bottom of the barrel, which begins to taste of the lees.

"As to the rest, Madame, I should not have dared to make so bold with the mysteries of physic, considering the

esteem that you and so many others have of it, had I not had encouragement from their own authors. I think there are of these among the old Latin writers but two, Pliny and Celsus: if these ever fall into your hands, you will find that they speak much more rudely of their art than I do; I but pinch it, they cut its throat. Pliny,[1] amongst other things, twits them with this, that when they are at the end of their rope, they have a pretty device to save themselves, by recommending their patients, whom they have teased and tormented with their drugs and diets to no purpose, some to vows and miracles, others to the hot baths. (Be not angry, Madame; he speaks not of those in our parts, which are under the protection of your house, and all Gramontins.) They have a third way of saving their own credit, of ridding their hands of us and securing themselves from the reproaches we might cast in their teeth of our little amendment, when they have had us so long in their hands that they have not one more invention left wherewith to amuse us, which is, to send us to the better air of some other country. This, Madame, is enough; I hope you will give me leave to return to my discourse, from which I have so far digressed, the better to divert you."

It was, I think, Pericles,[2] who being asked how he did: "you may judge," says he, "by these," showing some little scrolls of parchment he had tied about his neck and arms.[3] By which he would infer, that he must needs be very sick when he was reduced to a necessity of having recourse to such idle and vain fopperies, and of suffering himself to be so equipped. I dare not promise but that I may one day be so much a fool as to commit my life and death to the mercy and government of physicians; I may fall into such a frenzy; I dare not be responsible for my future constancy: but then, if any one ask me how I do, I may also answer, as Pericles did, "You may judge by this," showing my hand clutching six drachms of opium. It will be a very evident sign of a violent sickness: my judgment will be very much out of order; if once fear and impatience get

[1] Nat. Hist., xxix. 1. [2] Plutarch, in vita, c. 24.
[3] *i.e.*, Amulets.

such an advantage over me, it may very well be concluded that there is a dreadful fever in my mind.

I have taken the pains to plead this cause, which I understand indifferently, a little to back and support the natural aversion to drugs and the practice of physic, I have derived from my ancestors: to the end it may not be a mere stupid and inconsiderate aversion, but have a little more form; and also, that they who shall see me so obstinate in my resolution against all exhortations and menaces that shall be given me, when my infirmity shall press hardest upon me, may not think 'tis mere obstinacy in me; or any one so ill-natured, as to judge it to be any motive of glory: for it would be a strange ambition to seek to gain honour by an action my gardener or my groom can perform as well as I. Certainly, I have not a heart, to tumorous and windy, that I should exchange so solid a pleasure as health, for an airy and imaginary pleasure: glory, even that of the four sons of Aymon, is too dear bought by a man of my humour, if it cost him three swinging fits of the stone. Give me health, in God's name! Such as love physic, may also have good, great, and convincing considerations; I do not hate opinions contrary to my own: I am so far from being angry to see a discrepancy betwixt mine and other men's judgments, and from rendering myself unfit for the society of men, from being of another sense and party than mine, that on the contrary (the most general way that nature has followed being variety, and more in souls than bodies, forasmuch as they are of a more supple substance, and more susceptible of forms) I find it much more rare to see our humours and designs jump and agree. And there never were, in the world, two opinions alike, no more than two hairs, or two grains: the most universal quality is diversity.

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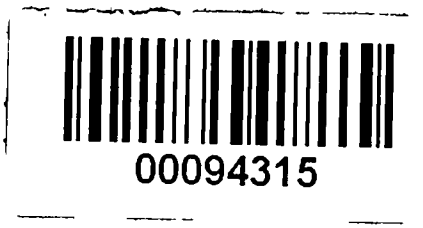
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